

BRITAIN LOOKS AT GERMANY

By
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DULCISSIMAE RERUM
ET DILECTISSIMAE
AUCTOR.

PREFACE

I CANNOT let the printers absorb this book without including in it three words, not merely of acknowledgment, but of warm gratitude.

First, to the *Observer*, for publishing and allowing me to reproduce in part a series of articles which I wrote for its central page in January and February last.

Second, to my friend, Henri Davray, for sending me, and therefore reminding me of, Jaurès' great book, *L'Armée Nouvelle*; and to Mr. C. G. Coulton, whose admirable study of compulsory service, first published in 1915, has greatly assisted me in my argument.

Third, to many friends in Parliament and out of it who have encouraged me by their support. They belong, thank Heaven, to all parties, and the number is growing fast.

EDWARD GRIGG.

30, Westminster Gardens,

S.W.1.

May 24th, 1938.

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	BETWEEN TWO WORLDS	PAGE ix
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PART I

THE CALL TO AGE AND EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER

I.	PATRIOTISM AND PROGRESS	3
II.	THE LURE OF ISOLATION	18
III.	LAW VERSUS LIFE	34
IV.	THE ECONOMIC ASPECT	54
V.	THE THREE LIONS AND NATIONAL DEFENCE	70
VI.	A REGISTER OF CITIZENS—I	93
VII.	A REGISTER OF CITIZENS—II	110
VIII.	OUR MILITARY PROBLEMS	125
IX.	THE FOUR INDISPENSABLES	143

PART II

THE CALL TO YOUTH

X.	THE STRENGTH THAT TELLS	177
XI.	FITNESS AND CHARACTER	192
XII.	THE NATION AND ITS LEADERS	218
XIII.	THE CASE FOR CITIZEN TRAINING—I	232
XIV.	THE CASE FOR CITIZEN TRAINING—II	254
XV.	TRUTH, THE GREAT AWAKENER	270

FOREWORD

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

THERE lies between the coasts of Normandy and Brittany a lovely estuary, which many English people know. Three small rivers mingle their waters in it, flowing sleepily through low, salt pastures famous for their sheep. Nearly every village in that storied corner of France is named after a saint, and many are still the home of primitive religious festivals adopted by early Christianity from the pagan past. The bay itself is wide and deep by many miles, a scene of constant ebb and flow, commanding thought upon the mutability of all things, including human life. For part of every day its whole extent is shimmering sand, grey or watery gold, as the changing lights decree, since when the tide is low the waters of the Channel lie far out on the horizon, mingling with the sky. But when the tide comes in, it sweeps faster than a man can pick his way, across the quicksand flats; and even while you watch, the earth is swallowed by the rising sea, and the whole expanse becomes a sheet of glimmering blue.

Nothing then breaks the level waters of the bay save two stark, projecting rocks; the smaller low and crouching, like a watch-dog; the larger rising steeply out of the sea. On this last a clinging huddle of ancient towers and trees and battlements rises to an exquisite church and steeple that may be seen for leagues round. Saint

Michael surmounts the pinnacle and dominates the historic rock, which bears his name. The architecture—part of it is justly named *La Merveille*—is one of the wonders of the world.

I was there last August, and shall never forget the moving beauty, on that summer day, of the church and hall and cloister which crown the summit of the rock. Nothing is lacking to their loveliness—except life. That amazing pile of buildings, rising from the crowded dwelling-houses at the foot to the knightly halls and galleries above, and all of it miraculously encrusted upon a narrow cone of rock, was once a living part of the history of England and France. More than once some portion of it has succumbed to fire or tempest, but the loss was always most beautifully made good. The Revolution degraded it to a prison after six centuries of high dignity and wealth; but now the whole fabric has been once again restored, and it is tended, swept, and garnished as the precious relic which it is by benefactors, architects, and caretakers working under the French Government.

A perpetual stream of visitors is guided over it throughout the summer months, but the forces which reared and once pulsed strongly within it are now forever extinct. It is like our European civilization, a monument of human faith and folly, achievement and relapse, waiting in suspense for what the new forces surging around it will presently bring to pass. The exquisite cloister, which shares the highest tier of architecture with the refectory and the church, was finished in 1228, the year in which St. Francis of Assisi was canonized. That last and lovely triumph of the

building abbots, with which their creative impulse expired, is like a mountain-top, remote and aloof, lifted above the word and empty of life.

The Scouts at Mont-Saint-Michel.

Coming down from it last summer through the Hall of the Knights of St. Michael and the Almonry to the ancient gateway with its noble flight of steps, which drops into the precipitous village street, we saw upon a bastion opposite, clear-cut against the sky, a troop of Rover Scouts. Young and resolute-looking, they stood high upon a platform of massive stone which the toil of far-away generations had raised, their backs to the piled achievement of the past, their eyes upon the distance out to sea, half earth, half water, half shadow, half sun. Silhouetted there in vivid relief, they seemed to stand for all our youth to-day, suspended between an older world that is almost played out and a newer world whose character none can clearly foresee. I saw them so on that August evening, and I have been seeing them, as Wordsworth saw the daffodils, in reflective moments ever since.

It is always easy for elderly moralists to suggest duties to the young; and I could use that still vivid picture as the text of a grave address to the youth of the present time. But that is not, in fact, what the picture most definitely suggested to me. Much, no doubt, depends upon the young; and I take it as a happy omen that the youths upon that bastion were Rover Scouts, since the spirit of service is what counts

most in every age. But it is the generation surviving from the War that still has decisive power in its hands, and the picture made by the Scouts at Mont-Saint-Michel set me moralizing more particularly on my own generation's remaining duty to the young. We still have the power. What can we best do with it?

The Lesson We Forget.

The peoples of Europe, old and young, are moving rapidly to another turning point in the history of Christian society, now nearly two thousand years old. On that at least all are agreed. Where was it that we who fought and won the war for England nineteen years ago went most astray from the wisdom that makes for peace? Some say—the Treaty of Versailles. It was not a wise treaty; but in the passions kindled by the war, democracy lost its balance, and it was almost impossible for us then to be either just to our late enemies or wise about ourselves. In England, as it seems to me, we made a greater mistake much earlier in the story—a mistake which is worth consideration now, because we are in mortal danger of making it again. Then, as now, we were deeply preoccupied with the pursuit of our own social and democratic ideals. We had only just emerged from a bitter conflict between Lords and Commons. In Ireland we were moving straight towards civil war. The suffragettes were raging everywhere and successfully exasperating our patient police. The Navy was, comparatively speaking, twice as strong as it is to-day, and the Army had been most

effectively reorganized. But there was, as usual, a shortage of Regular recruits ; Lord Roberts's campaign for National Service had ended in defeat ; and the new Territorial Army, excellent in form, was much below establishment.

All these things were carefully noted by the enemies of peace abroad ; but we ignored the effect of our proceedings upon a European situation heavy with impending storm. It was our weakness, then as now, to think of freedom mainly from the standpoint of the rights which it conferred, and much less from that of the obligations which it entailed ; and thus we failed to reckon sufficiently with a factor vital for the preservation of peace—the estimate which other nations were forming of our national morale.

Strength Made Visible.

Work out as you will the preliminaries of that fateful 4th of August, 1914. This or that, no doubt, we might have done ; but the fundamental mistake which could not then be repaired was that we had allowed Germany fatally to underestimate the spirit and temper of the British race. Because we put so much emphasis on liberty, so little on duty and discipline, we led her to believe us effete, incapable of sacrifice, played out, and infirm. Because she thought us so, she challenged us, and was thunderstruck—too late—at the result. It is true that in the end her estimate of us was triumphantly disproved ; but millions of lives were sacrificed in disproving it, and while we are still staggering

from the effects of that ordeal, another of the same character seems to be drawing on. Is it all to be suffered again?

The moral for the war generation which is still in power, and should with that experience behind it see the present danger plainly, is surely to realize that our influence for peace depends not only on what we say and do, not only even on what we actually are, but also on what we are believed to be by those who may be tempted to put our quality to the test. Moral influence is a complex thing; and however worthy you may think yourself to exercise it, you will not in fact be able to exercise it with effect upon anyone who does not think you worthy to exercise it and does not regard you as just.

If, then, we are to use our influence effectively for peace, we must not be guided exclusively by what we ourselves think of other nations, but must strive to make them see us as we wish to be seen. We may declare ourselves entirely disinterested; but they may not share that view. We may hold ourselves worthy of our Empire and our wealth; but they may have growing doubts. We may argue that our code of international conduct is framed in the interests of all, while they remain convinced that it is framed principally in our own. No nation, nor group of nations, can yet aspire to be undisputed law-givers to the whole world; and if we are now to cast the balancing counters which we possess into the scale of peace we must see ourselves as others see us, and hold their respect for strength as well as justice, justice as well as strength.

A New Searching of Heart.

I shall, therefore, assume the gift of self-analysis for which Burns prayed, and try in particular to look at this country through German eyes. It should not be too difficult. One may gather volumes from English books on Hitler's Germany, whether appreciative or not; one may read still more in the columns of the German Press; and one may also gain some light from friendly Germans in private talk.

Not that German views on England differ very greatly from those of other nations. Eliminate the Nazi or Fascist contempt of democracy, and German or Italian criticism of English ways will not be much unlike what may be heard in France. Eliminate from that the continental astonishment of Europe at our failure to make a universal duty of some training for defence, and you will find a corresponding vein of criticism in the friendliest quarters of the United States. We must not once again ignore the state of foreign opinion about us if we are to keep old friends, make new ones, and maintain the peace of the world. For a still most Puritan nation this fearless study of itself through others' spectacles should be a stimulating exercise.

Some candid introspection is overdue, since our incomprehension of other people's attitude towards us combined with an almost fanatical absorption in our own point of view has once more led us blindly to the edge of a precipice.

By comparison with the strongest nation on the continent we are weaker in offensive and defensive

power to-day than we have ever been since we lost the American Colonies. At that period, says Mahan, the historian of sea-power, "England was everywhere outmatched and embarrassed," and the war ended with an earlier Treaty of Versailles which has been described as the most shameful in English history. Oswald, Britain's representative in the negotiations with Franklin, informed the latter at the outset that her enemies "had the ball at their feet," and expressed a timid hope that they "would use their power with moderation and magnanimity." The cause of our humiliation lay in our domestic politics, not in any real lack of power.

Let us then look closely at the effect of our domestic controversies upon our standing in the world of our own day. We have time to repair our position still, even though our air defences have fallen so much in arrear that we are threatened with an insecurity as grave as that created by indiscriminate submarine warfare in the central crisis of the last war. Our manufacturing resources are enormous, and we must strive to redress the balance by every means within our power. We must, and we will.

But that alone will not suffice. We are now, like the other nations of Central and Western Europe, exposed to sudden and remorseless attack in the very heart of our own land, because the air arm can overleap in fewer minutes than it has miles our encircling moat of sea. That fact is so new that we have not yet appreciated its terrible significance.

The Prime Minister, for his part, has not concealed it from Parliament. These are his own words on the subject, spoken in the great debate on Defence

which prefaced this year's discussion of the Service Estimates :—¹

“The corner-stone of our defence policy must be the security of the United Kingdom. Our main strength lies in the resources of man power, productive capacity and endurance of this country, and unless these can be maintained not only in peace but in the early stages of war, when they will be the subject of continuous attack, our defeat will be certain whatever might be our fate in secondary spheres elsewhere.”

“Continuous attack,” persisting through the early stages of a war—the words are alarming enough, since we must obviously survive the early stages if our potential strength is ultimately to count. And they become the more alarming when we remember that the Minister who uttered them was Lord Baldwin's chief colleague at the time when he said to Parliament that “no Government in this country could live to-day that was content to have an Air Force of any inferiority to any Air Force within striking distance” of our shores.

Mr. Chamberlain was associated with that statement. It binds him as completely as it should have bound the Minister who uttered it. Yet three years later we are being adjured to believe that an inferiority of at least 100 per cent to Germany in the air is a situation with which this powerful country should be happily content.

It will not do. The Government has not been equal to the pledge which it gave ; and this great nation on

¹ Hansard, March 7th, 1938, p. 1563.

which the cause of human liberty depends, must take its representatives in hand without further division or ado, if the peril which now menaces it is to be driven from its gates.

When I wrote of our moral standing in the columns of the *Observer* during the first two months of the year, I was anxious and disturbed. Now anxiety has deepened into profound alarm. Nor am I alone in that experience. Alarm is mounting everywhere. With those who best know the facts, it is sleepless, devouring, intense; and the country as a whole, with its strange but unerring instinct, is waking like a sleepy giant and demanding action of its Parliament.

What action? That is the question; and it is only because they fear the country that all parties still blink the only answer to it. We are going once more through the hesitations and avoidances which put us two years late with our rearmament, and every month of paltering makes our situation worse.

Despite the democratic character of our political system, independent opinion has little chance of making itself heard in the House of Commons against the great executive machine which governs procedure and debate. If both Government and Opposition are set for political reasons on burking some question, it can, like the need for rearmament, be long and effectively burked. Despite the terrible jeopardy to which that process has brought us, it is being repeated at Westminster to-day, and only the country itself can save itself from the inevitable results.

Time has hitherto been always on our side. We could count on islanded immunity while gathering our

resources for the fray. But now that island privilege has gone, and we must be organized and ready for defence in all our vital centres from the first threat of war. Ready, and seen to be ready, in our spirit as a nation no less than in our command of arms. There will be no future for our youth comparable to that of which we dreamed at the end of 1918, if the moral challenge of our present situation does not grind a new edge on our minds. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that the future of Parliamentary government in this century depends on it.

The sceptical may ask why—"are there not other more or less Parliamentary democracies in Europe, and are they not as much concerned in the liberties of Europe as ourselves?" The answer is that the other democracies in the danger zone are already doing their utmost; they have armed and trained their peoples; every moral and material counter they possess has been thrown into the scales.

Our material contribution is considerable, and it must be rapidly increased; but the weight of purchased arms will never by itself suffice to turn the balance as we desire. That can only be done by throwing the weight of national organization into service of our cause. We alone of all countries have not yet used that counter, and it is the decisive one. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that we hold the fate of democracy in our hands.

That is the main theme of this book, for which I would that I had a stronger pen. The first part will deal with the immediate duty which age and experience owe to youth; the second with the part which youth itself can play.

The rising generation in this country is showing many signs of depression and disillusionment. The prospect before it looks dark, and it feels—not without reason—that its elders have, in current phrase, “made a mess of it.” Alas, we have ; but there is no reason yet for fatalism or loss of hope. War is not inevitable ; we can prevent it, if we will take the necessary steps in time.

It is for us, the elder generation, first of all to do our part. Youth must be assured of greater security for its heritage of freedom ; it must be enabled to give its whole-hearted allegiance to a foreign policy devoted to the maintenance of law and liberty ; it must also be furnished with an economic policy that promises a steady rise in our standards of life and some guarantee against the tidal recurrence of unemployment and distress.

These things can be done, if we will do them. But they call for another patriotic effort even harder than that which saved us, only seven years ago, from financial collapse.

Not till we of the elder generation have played our part can we justly speak to youth of its duty to the Commonwealth and itself. We are not entitled to expect from youth a greater sense of public duty, a wider and more hopeful vision, or any new growth of confidence in those who still direct the State, unless we can, in the next few years, bring Europe to a better frame of mind and lay the foundations of an era in which civilization will once again move forward instead of back.

It needs a mighty effort ; but we can do it if we choose, for this great democracy is the captain of its soul, and it has, when roused, an unconquerable heart.

PART I

THE CALL TO AGE AND EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I

PATRIOTISM AND PROGRESS

BRITAIN is on the eve of a great awakening. If only she can get rid of certain obstinate Victorian complexes which dog her thinking and find her true form in time, she will save herself and Europe from the eclipse of civilization which is threatened by another war.

We have been suffering for twenty years from a fatigue of mind and spirit induced by the long strain of the last war. It was not unnatural, when all that effort, endurance and sacrifice had culminated in so overwhelming a victory for democracy and its ideals, to assume that the victory would be permanent and that all its fruits would be gathered without further effort and sacrifice. Democracy had shown its staying-power through a terribly arduous ordeal. It had paid a heavy price indeed for the supremacy of its ideals, and it had reason to assume that it would henceforth inspire and regulate the life of the whole world.

In most of Europe, however, the struggle had bitten so deep and memories of the past were still so strong that British and continental thinking were never really on the same plane. I remember vividly how that difference stood out in the international conferences which I happened to attend in 1921 and 1922; and the difference persisted obstinately year after year despite our efforts to wear it down. But in Britain we gave ourselves up to the belief that the world

could be re-fashioned to our desire by faith and fervour alone.

During all that period of twenty years our minds have been preoccupied with two dominant themes. The one was international justice, the reign of peace and law in international affairs. For that we trusted to the League, and we gave it a devotion which was absolutely whole-hearted and sincere. We also knew in our hearts, as the war fever cooled, that the Treaties of Peace were in some respects both unjust and unwise, and we counted upon the League to straighten out their iniquities as they came to light ; but we failed to realize that, even under the League, those nations would control the prospects of revision who wielded the greatest military power.

Nations, like individuals, cannot have their cake and eat it as well. We neglected the need for power in the pursuit of our ideals, and concentrated our resources upon social betterment at home. That was our other dominant theme, and all parties were as much obsessed with it as with the ideal of peace and law in the international field. The consequence was that we made great strides in social progress while other nations, to the neglect of social progress, maintained their military power.

We have, in fact, always flattered ourselves that our spectacular disarmament was setting a noble example to other peoples, but that has not been their view at all. The other chief democracies, with France at their head, have felt that they needed more and more military security in proportion as Britain disarmed. " Since you," they said, " will make no sacrifice for peace, we must

make the more. Since you are pursuing the primrose path of comfort and social betterment at home, we must keep to the harder one." They would have been far less nervous, and the limitation of armaments might have been achieved, if we had maintained a military power proportionate to our wealth and standing during those critical few years before Germany rearmed; but we were in the grip of our own dreams, and we honestly thought it sufficient to call upon other nations to conform.

Unhappily the supposed effects of our social policy at home assisted to confirm the foreign view that Britain could no longer be counted upon as a guardian of law and order in the outer world.

The unemployment "dole," as it was widely called, was first introduced as a measure of justice to men who had served in the war and could find no employment when demobilized. It was rapidly extended to young men and women who had never rendered the country a day's service of any kind. Other social expenditure grew proportionately; and when the great depression of 1930 struck the world, it all began to cost us more than we could afford.

The May Report created some stir at home, but nothing to the stir which it created abroad; and when in the autumn of 1931 a small portion of the Navy showed some resentment at cuts in pay which had not been properly explained, Europe assumed in a flash that the strength of Britain was fatally undermined.

We showed at once that it was not; but in the course of doing so we developed an even greater indifference to the weakness of our standing in the European balance

of power. The consequences are now upon us, and it is mere illusion piled upon illusion to contend that any foreign policy could have prevented those consequences from being broadly what they are.

What, then, is the truth that we have to learn? Surely that service and, if need be, sacrifice, must be added to aspiration and faith, if our ideals of international and social justice are to come into their own.

— We have assumed too easily that we can dictate our views of right to other peoples though they in fact are making sacrifices for their national ideals which put us in the shade. We have also ignored too long the effect upon other peoples of our indifference to the conviction universally held elsewhere that all male citizens must render some period of service to the State if their country is to be sound and strong. We are prodigal in moral judgements upon other peoples but obstinately blind to those which they pass on ourselves.

The idealism of this country has rendered, and can still render, sterling service to the world. It is not to disparage our dreams of international or social justice that I am wasting hours of Eastertide sunshine in enslavement to a pen. My hope and trust is that those dreams may still prevail. But if they are to do so, we must not rely exclusively on eloquence and expenditure, nor yet upon professional Fighting Services without, behind them, a nation alert to its dangers and organized to meet them half-way. Our ideals need the service, not only of our lips and purses, but also of our lives, if they are not to be overwhelmed.

The Conflict in Our Minds.

The political life of this country has always reflected the play of two great emotional forces, which act and react upon each other in constantly changing ways. One is the force of patriotic feeling, the love of country and of all for which country stands, the desire to keep intact its ancient ways of life, the pride in its achievement through a thousand storied years. The other is the force of liberal feeling, the burning desire to raise all human standards, to spread new comfort and happiness in our own homes, to build around them also a better and saner world.

Those Governments are always strongest in which the two forces combine. When either force too far outruns the other in the conduct of our affairs, a majority of the people swings against it and the Government falls. The National Governments of our time have hitherto effectively united behind them the two master impulses which rule the British mind ; but a curious change has recently come upon the country, and it cannot as yet resolve the conflict of feeling to which events have given rise.

The role of the great parties has also been curiously inverted by their different reactions to the problems of the times. The Socialists are in our day the national leaders of the forces of radical reform ; but they are now attacking a predominantly Conservative Ministry for lack of genuine patriotism because, in its anxiety for peace, it is "truckling to dictators" and betraying the interests of the Empire as well as its ideals.

This country is always sensitive to the suggestion that it is playing a subservient and undignified part in international affairs. Even Disraeli, with all his eloquence and resource, had difficulty in stemming the tide of Gladstone's Midlothian campaign. It is true, of course, that he weathered it for a time, and brought back "Peace with Honour" from Berlin; but he lost the General Election which followed within two years, and Gladstone himself fell afterwards for compromising the honour of the country in Egypt, South Africa and elsewhere.

At the present moment, the mind of Britain is divided in much the same way. One part of it is deeply concerned by the failure of the League and by the successes of aggressive militarism in China, Central Europe and Spain. It would like the country to assert itself again, and to stand effectively for the liberties of Europe and the ideals of the League. But another part recoils from any policy which may lead us into war, and it is not yet fully awake to the danger into which it has been brought by its slowness to rearm against the new peril of the air.

The trouble of the Socialist party is that while it wishes to lead and guarantee the forces of democracy and progress in Europe, it fears rearmament and national organization for defence because of the power which they may place in "reactionary" hands. The trouble of the Government is that it hesitates to divide the country on that issue, and is therefore reduced to hoping more from diplomacy than the most consummate statesmanship can possibly achieve while the country lacks all-round defensive power. The waters of politics are, therefore, in the grip of contrary winds and tides, like

a choppy Channel sea, and the nation is not told what it really ought to do.

If only we could resolve our complexes about national service and Fascism at home, this dangerous confusion would clear. The Opposition could proceed to convert the country to its own views of foreign policy free from the discountenancing accusation that it wills the end without willing the means ; and the Government could take its own constructive line of mediation and compromise with real hope of success.

The Government, after all, must change some day and the Socialists come into power. Do they want to inherit a situation of even greater danger than that which confronted Mr. Chamberlain when Lord Baldwin resigned? And does a predominantly Conservative Government for its part wish to leave behind it a record of failure in making the Commonwealth secure? Surely neither can so betray the democracy which they guide.

But if so, they must agree to resolve these obstinate complexes about citizen service and Fascism. They can do it by agreement, and do it they must, or this democracy is doomed.

A Great French Socialist.

It has struck me that light may be thrown upon the problem of resolving them from the writings of a great French Socialist, who was also a great French patriot, assassinated by a blind and insensate student on July 31st, 1914. Many people in this country must have known Jean Jaurès well. I only met him once

at the time of the Dreyfus trial when I was still an undergraduate, but I have always kept since that meeting a vivid memory of his vigour, sincerity and clearness of mind. France lost in him a leader who might have saved her from the worst of her present troubles, had he lived.

In this book, first published in 1910, Jaurès insists again and again that social progress must make its way in intimate association with the traditions and obligations of patriotism. To set the one against the other, as Karl Marx did, was in his opinion to destroy the only instrument through which social progress can be realized.

Two conditions, he declared, are essential for progress towards a better ordering of the world. The one is belief in a cause which grips the heart and steels the will of men; the other is an organ through which that spirit can express itself and achieve its ends. It is true, of course, that he wrote before the foundation of the League; but he anticipated the principles of the Covenant in all his thought on international affairs and nevertheless maintained that a Socialist democracy must act through its own State and make its own State as powerful as it could, if it was to further the coming of a better social and international order throughout the world.

Here are two passages which summarize his ideas :—

“In order that men (he wrote) may give all of which they are capable, in order that they may overcome by a stronger impulse the adversaries of their cause, it is not sufficient that they should be members of a historic group or nation and that they should base themselves on its tradition however glorious. . . . It is necessary in addition that their

latent energies should be brought into play by some lofty ardour or excitement ; that in defending their country with its traditions and established ways of life they should be conscious of serving some vaster purpose and of working for a great expansion either of social justice or of power. It is necessary, indeed, that some great intoxication—for glory, or domination, or liberty, or some other cause fanatically cherished—should raise their spirit to abnormal strength and upset the balance of forces which habitually holds them in thrall.”¹

But Jaurès maintained that patriotism must be the basis of that wider inspiration, the soil out of which it grows:—

“Let no one say that nations, because they were created and fashioned by force, have no title to be the organs of a new humanity founded on right and fashioned by mind, that they cannot be the constituent elements of a higher order, the living stones in that greater city which is to be built by the spirit and the conscious will of men.”²

By patriotism, moreover, Jaurès meant something more than love of country ; he meant also readiness to train and serve in its defence. He recurs again and again throughout the book to this necessity, because he was convinced that the forces of democracy, by which he meant the proletariat, would deliver them-

¹ *L'Armée Nouvelle*, by Jean Jaurès, first published in 1910. I have translated freely in order to keep the spirit of Jaurès' prose.

² *Ibid*, p. 455.

selves over to another long era of oppression from without their country or else from within, if they failed to establish a military organization representing the spirit of the nation as a whole. "If," he wrote, the proletariat of France adopts a hostile attitude towards the army—

"even if it only sulks and refuses to co-operate, then every change in the form of military institutions will end either in dissolving the nation's defensive strength and putting the country at the mercy of all sudden pressure from abroad, or else in re-establishing an armed oligarchy all the more dangerous because an appearance of democratic organization will conceal the continuing power and privilege of the possessing classes, sole masters through popular indifference of the instruments of repression and war."¹

Therefore, in the heavy black type which he reserved for the central points of his argument, he called upon the people to demand "that the nation should organize its military strength without privilege of caste or class, without other preoccupation than that of national defence alone."² On this basis, he proclaimed "the organization of national defence and the organization of international peace" as "joint and inseparable aims."

This profound and eloquent study of a democratic people's proper attitude towards national organization for defence is surely worth attention when, in some other European countries, the forces of Nationalism and Socialism have been welded by dictatorship into a militant unity for the pursuit neither of peace nor of

¹ Ibid, p. 341.

² Ibid, p. 5.

international justice but of hegemony over the Western world. It is beyond question that the dictatorships have given their peoples an effective military organization combined with a militant belief in their destiny, and that they have raised them thereby to a higher power. The authoritarian systems in Germany, Italy, Russia, Japan and Turkey vary in many ways with the character of their rulers and the qualities of the peoples themselves ; but they have one and all produced a regeneration and a strength of national spirit which only come to peoples fired by devotion to a cause.

Nationalism and Communism.

Germany and Russia—to take the two examples which most divide opinion in this country—are not really different from each other in the character of their régimes. In both, the dictatorships have subordinated the mind of the individual to the will of the State ; in both all class distinctions have been annihilated ; in both private enterprise is either non-existent or else completely controlled by the Government ; in both the whole nation is organized and regulated as a military, industrial and financial machine.

The conflict between them, which goes deep indeed despite these resemblances, does not arise from internal differences, but solely from the fact that Russian Communism attacks and seeks to undermine the national spirit in other peoples, whereas in Germany Nationalism and Socialism are living and essential parts of a single patriotic philosophy.

That is the cleavage between the two ideologies which makes Communism the deadly enemy of the Nazi régime, and it is also the point upon which British opinion divides. In this country Conservatives prefer the German system to the Russian solely because it is nationalist in spirit and does not seek to undermine the unity of other nations by dividing them on class lines against themselves. But the Russian ideology, reinforcing the doctrine of Marx with propaganda in a thousand insinuating forms, has undoubtedly turned much Socialist thought into the anti-patriotic channel which Jaurès denounced. Very few of our people are Communists ; but Communist teaching has spread the idea that patriotism is incompatible with the solidarity of workers throughout the world, and therefore with the brotherhood of all downtrodden men.

It is sad that in this broad and moving faith the workers of all countries, including our own, should be summoned to beware of the lure of patriotism as a betrayal of democratic ideals ; but that process is constantly going on :

“ The struggle of the near future (said a speaker at a Labour Congress the other day) would not lie between the democratic countries and the Fascist countries, but between the ruling classes in both countries and the oppressed workers whatever their colour.”

That is the voice of the Independent Labour Party only, and I doubt if more than a small minority of workers in this country would subscribe to a denunciation of patriotism in so extreme a form ; but there is

widely prevalent a fixed idea that patriotism and service to the country are used by the forces of reaction as a cloak either for capitalism in opposition to social justice or for imperialism in opposition to a higher and broader conception of justice in international affairs ; and that view is by no means confined to Socialists alone. It has been carried through the middle vote, which owns no party, by the propaganda of the League of Nations Union, which is—in theory at any rate—non-partisan ; and many of the younger generation have been persuaded to believe that they must choose between patriotism and loyalty to the League, though few would maintain that a sense of duty to one's own family was incompatible with a love of humankind.

If only we could produce a British Jaurès to dispel that emasculating idea !

“ Patriotism (he wrote) is not an exhausted idea, but one which is growing greater and being transformed. I have always been convinced that the proletariat would never in its heart of hearts subscribe to any doctrine of national abdication and servitude. To revolt against the despotism of kings, against the tyranny of capital and the employing class, and then submissively to accept the yoke of conquest, domination and foreign militarism would be so puerile and miserable a contradiction that all the forces of instinct and reason would sweep it away at the first alarm. . . . No proletariat which renounced with national independence its own freedom of development could have the vigour to overcome capitalism.”

And again :—

“The truth is that wherever patriotism exists—wherever, that is, there are in being historic groups with a conscience of long continuity and cohesion—an attempt against their liberty and integrity as nations is an attempt against civilization itself, a relapse into barbarism.”

These opinions would undoubtedly be endorsed by a vast majority of our electorate, Socialist or otherwise, if they were put to the vote as they stand. The depth of feeling aroused by the use of military power against the Governments of Abyssinia, Austria and Spain is indeed a “lofty ardour or excitement” of the kind which Jaurès postulated for the victory of a cause.

But it will not face the fact, upon which Jaurès insisted with equal cogency and truth, that the only way in which a democracy can make such ardour tell in a world where very different enthusiasms are supported by tremendous military power is to give its own country a strength and military organization equal to the part which it wishes to play and the resources which it commands.

This is, at the moment, the sad truth. When Jaurès declares that to be trained and ready for national service is the democratic duty of every able-bodied man, the majority of our crusaders part company with him at once. “No,” they say, “that doctrine may be necessary for other democracies less fortunately placed ; but we are not prepared to accept it here, because it would involve a sacrifice of individual freedom and expose us to Fascism at home. We will not on any account

admit the Trojan horse of national organization for defence within our sea-bound walls."

It is, no doubt, a strange idea to suppose that any nation can do much for the security of others which will not organize for its own security at home; and it is small comfort for Conservatives that it dooms the Socialist party to impotence, if it dooms the country and its Government to the same. For the time being we continue to trade upon the knowledge of foreign nations that there is a latent power in Britain when provoked which is altogether belied by her apparent imbecility of mind; but that is a wasting asset in the present state of the world.

We beguile ourselves indeed if we suppose that recent contrasts between our pretensions and our performances have gone unmarked by foreign States, and that any British Foreign Secretary can still wave a wand of mysterious power. Europe knows that we are rearming with some determination, and that is all to the good; but it also knows that we have not as yet attained the standard of air power which Lord Baldwin laid down, and that we are much behind the patent requirements of our situation in preparation to resist the bombing aeroplane. The Opposition may therefore condemn the Government for pusillanimity—that is its privilege; but it would soon realize if it came into office that strength of arm and armour is indispensable to strength of policy in a world that is armed to the teeth.

If British Socialism had a Jaurès, it would be a formidable force. But no Paynim will respect a crusader who fears to wear a sword lest it should cross his legs.

CHAPTER II

THE LURE OF ISOLATION

It is not pleasant to Conservatives to be told that any Government which they support is "truckling" to aggressive militarism and failing to maintain Britain's great traditions in world affairs. They want the voice of their country to be firm and clear, and they at least have never faltered in their demand that its defences should be strong. They won seat after seat at the last election on two main grounds—that the National Government stood for courageous support of the League of Nations against the challenge of arbitrary force, and that it would safeguard the country itself against war. Those claims were entirely sincere, and the reaction of our public to the Hoare-Laval compromise showed how deeply they were cherished in our hearts and minds. We have never felt clear and contented about foreign policy since that time.

The truth is that we have ever since been divided in our minds. We have awoken with a sense of shock to the discovery that the League cannot enforce its authority without resorting to force—a necessity which we had hitherto counted upon the League to avert. The very thought of war is repugnant to us; but we are rightly unwilling on that account to abandon altogether the principles of the Covenant. It would, of course, be easy to adopt a policy of pure expediency,

but that can never satisfy a national conscience which insists that Britain has higher duties to herself and to the world.

The policy of pure expediency, which counsels complete detachment from European affairs, appeals nevertheless to an instinct which has always been strong. European entanglements unquestionably involve us in some danger of war. It might, some of us think, have been otherwise if the League had shown real solidarity in resisting aggression at an earlier stage. But since the League has failed in that respect, we have to face an entirely new state of affairs; and many arguments are advanced for letting things in Europe take their own course without interference on our part. This may not be a heroic policy, but it is, its exponents declare, a policy of commonsense which corresponds with our interests and with our dislike of war. "If," they say, "you do not mean to take any real risk of war, keep clear of declarations and commitments which give a contrary impression. You can then steer a safe, dignified and honourable course without misleading others and humiliating yourselves."

The most effective answer to this counsel is that all our history teaches that it would not in fact be safe. It is one thing to adopt a dictatorial and unaccommodating line in foreign problems; that certainly invites rebuff and humiliation, unless you are prepared to fight. But it is quite another to suppose that you can avoid all danger to yourself by simply standing aloof. That ends in leaving you without friends, and it happens to be the line that the only Power which really menaces our security most wishes us to take.

The British democracy in Europe numbers only 45 millions. With all its character and wealth, it has a burden to bear which is almost beyond its strength; and it can count on little immediate help from the other members of the Empire, though a menace to its security is a menace to the peace and progress of a quarter of the earth. The German Government now disposes absolutely of 75 million souls, and it may in the near future add further to that enormous strength. If we are utterly indifferent to what this strength may entail for the rest of Europe, Germany will be our only friend. It will not be an easy friendship—on those terms. It may save trouble at the beginning. Will it save trouble at the end?

They little understand the present rulers of Germany or the temper of the German race who expect them to show a delicate regard for nations which are manifestly inferior in strength for war to themselves. We reduced Germany to abject humiliation only twenty years ago; and that triumph was secured very largely by the naval blockade—an instrument of warfare which tells most severely upon the civil population, without regard for age or sex.

Yet we have amongst us a large number of people who are simple enough to believe that we need only isolate ourselves from other nations and look on European events with calm indifference in order to ensure that Germany will not use to our disadvantage any chance we may afford her of returning that unforgotten compliment.

There are two conditions, and two only, on which

we can maintain a friendly and honourable relation with the other great branch of the Teutonic race. The first of them is that we should appreciate Germany's need of wider political and economic scope and should not set ourselves against her national aspirations merely because we dislike the character of her Government. The other is that our endeavours to reach an honourable and stable understanding with her should be manifestly inspired by a desire for justice and fair play rather than by fear of falling out with her.

Justice and fair play are comprehensive terms, and we must do our utmost to see that they are honoured in Germany's dealings with her neighbours as well as in our dealings with her. A Laodicean indifference to events upon the Continent, whatever their character, would leave us without friends, and we should awake one day to find that if isolation was cheap and safe in the beginning, it was expensive and dangerous in the long run.

Lord Grey's Prescience

There are some reflexions on this aspect of foreign policy in Lord Grey's Memoirs which are worth attention at the present time.

In the passage to which I refer he is considering what might have been the course of events before the War, had Bismarck still controlled the policy of the Reich, and he puts in the mouth of the great German words of sage advice which he might have used to his countrymen :—

“I will tell you what I would have done. After the Franco-Russian Alliance was made I should have foreseen that, in spite of an English Minister’s boast about ‘splendid isolation,’ the discomfort of England’s position must bring her to Germany, and when the offer came, as come it did to you, I would have made sure that it did not come to nothing. There would then have been no agreement with France, or, if there had been, it would have been conditioned by the Alliance or previous Agreement with Germany. I should have had my hand in it, and known all about it; and I should also have known all about the relations between England and Russia, just as you knew when Austria and Russia joined in the Mürzsteg programme about the Balkans. Then, when the Russian Fleet had been destroyed by the Japanese, I should have made the German Fleet strong enough to over-match the French, telling England my object and stopping naval expenditure there. England in this policy would have been no obstacle to German commercial expansion; even as it was, she practically came to agreement with you about the Bagdad Railway.

“Then, if I thought the time had come for war, I should have remembered how, in 1870, the British Government required me, as a condition of neutrality, to sign an agreement to respect Belgium, and what English statesmen said about it at the time. I should have made sure whether English feeling was still the same, and have told the General Staff that they must have a plan that did not involve Belgium, or else they must have no war. With England neutral,

I should have been sure of Italy ; with France and Russia unable to maintain supplies of munitions, or even to purchase them from abroad, the war would not have been long and victory would have been certain. Then easy terms for France and Russia, as for Austria in 1866, and Germany would have been supreme on the Continent. *England would, meanwhile, by the development of modern weapons and aircraft, have lost much of the safety she once had as an island : she would have had no friend but Germany, and Germany could have made that friendship what she pleased.*"¹

I think my readers will agree that this advice about the past is startling in its relevance to the present situation. Even in 1925, when this book was published, Lord Grey had already foreseen the extent to which the development of air power must affect our insular position, and he at least had no illusions about the virtues of isolation as a receipt for British security.

There are signs indeed that Hitler lacks Bismarck's great command of patience ; but in other respects he is following closely what Lord Grey conceived as Bismarck's way to complete supremacy in European affairs. In particular, like Bismarck, he refrains from challenging our command of the sea ; but he frankly expects us in return to concede him a free hand on the Continent, and he would like to persuade us that we have nothing to lose, in honour or security, by that arrangement.

It may be therefore as well to note what Lord Grey himself would have expected from British acquiescence in it. This is his final comment :—

¹ *Twenty-Five Years*, Vol. I, pp. 243-5. My italics.

“Had such a policy been pursued by Germany, I think it not only possible, but almost certain, that British Ministers and British opinion would have reacted to it as described. *The result would have been German predominance and British dependence, but this would not have been foreseen in London till too late.*”¹

Whatever may have been possible before 1914, there is no doubt that Germany is pursuing such a policy at the present moment. We need not be unfriendly about it nor set ourselves against her at every point because there are some points on which we are bound to resist.

We do not want either to exercise or to suffer domination; and we must therefore have a balance in Europe which gives security to all. The Germans will respect us for taking their measure correctly, even though they find us unwilling to enthrone them as the arbiters of European civilization; but they will despise our sloth and blindness if we allow ourselves to be duped into friendliness and complacent isolation from European affairs.

The Military Mind

The British family of nations is oceanic in character, and all except two of its members are far removed from European problems. But Britain and Ireland are open to domination from the continent of Europe, and they must be on guard against it. Germany's

¹ Ibid, p. 245. My italics.

essential aims are continental, and need not clash with ours provided that they do not destroy the equilibrium of the European family.

But that equilibrium has always been a fundamental condition of British freedom and security, and it is more so to-day than ever because, for the time being, air power has weakened our insular position. Our freedom, moreover, while essential to ourselves, is no less essential to the freedom of other nations. We are trustees for freedom, and we cannot abdicate from that responsibility.

Germany, for her part, thinks in terms of military power, and it is utter folly to suppose that she will not use her immense command of force to the full against all whom she believes incapable of resisting it. We must therefore be proof against all forms of military pressure, including the sudden knock-out blow, if we are to be on equal terms with her. Her leaders, to do them justice, have never made a secret of their determination to use the pressure of armed strength to the uttermost to secure what they desire. They have refused again and again to state their aims, because those aims will be limited solely by what they regard as practicable from time to time. The world is changing fast, and Germany is now the great adventurer, governed by men who are ready to take great risks in their pursuit of power.

That is not to say that they want war. I am sure they do not want it, but I am equally sure that they will run great risks of it unless they can be persuaded that they have less to gain than to fear from the process of playing upon other nations' weakness and love of peace.

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Lord Londonderry knows them personally, and has held many conversations with them. He has also frankly criticized the British Government for what he regards as serious mistakes in their past conduct towards Germany. No one, therefore, can suppose that he is animated by prejudice or hostility towards Herr Hitler and his associates.

Yet this is what he wrote in a personal letter to Herr von Ribbentrop in December last after Lord Halifax's visit to Germany :—

“ My conversations with you have, of course, been only very superficial, but I look with anxiety on your intensive rearmament, and I know quite well that the training which you are giving to your people is welding together a tremendous force for carrying into effect, by means of threats, or war itself, what you desire to achieve. . . .

“. . . I feel in my own mind that if only Germany, in conference with Great Britain, France and Italy, could categorically state the limit of her ambitions and her desire to achieve as quickly as possible a real limitation of armaments, we should then find that these terrible suspicions, which are paralyzing in their effect, that Germany is waiting until she is fully armed for a further development of her plans, can be removed for so long a period as the statesmen of these four countries can settle amongst themselves. If we are just going on drifting, as we are drifting at the present moment, waiting for German demands, then I am quite sure we must come up in opposition to some of these demands, and the catas-

trophe which we are one and all fearing will be upon us before we know where we are.”¹

How can that danger be averted by a policy of isolation and complaisance? The predominant mind in Germany is, I repeat, the military mind, which weighs all diplomacy in terms of the military organization by which it is backed. We shall not escape from that assessment by shutting our eyes to it. Ignore it as we may, isolate ourselves as we may from its immediate effects, it will ultimately seek us out and put us to the test. The security and peace which we obtain meanwhile will be a false security, an utterly delusive peace.

Principle and Interest

The truth regarding British foreign policy is therefore this—that in the last analysis principle and interest both point the same way. The opposition between them disappears from view when the scope and nature of British interests are fully understood.

To defend all British territory against aggression, to protect British investments, to further British trade are aims and objects which our foreign policy must serve. They are, of course, national and imperial in character, and they are material by comparison with broad humanitarian ideals. But they are essential to the pursuit both of social justice at home and of international justice abroad, and they cannot in fact be safeguarded by any policy which ignores our wider

¹ *Ourselves and Germany*, pp. 156-7.

responsibility for the maintenance of peace and liberty in the outer world.

Despite the envy and hatred which it has often had to withstand, the British Commonwealth has remained intact because its interests and its ideals alike have in fact coincided with those of all other freedom-loving Powers. Our immense strength and wealth have never misled us into projects of domination over other peoples as civilized as ourselves. We have stood to the best of our ability for equal freedom for all, and we must continue to stand for it if our own freedom and that of others is to survive.

The policy of complacent isolation is therefore nothing better than a deadly lure. Principle and interest are both against it. It might save us from trouble for a time, but it would destroy us in the end ; for it ignores two maxims of foreign policy which Britain should never forget. The first is that the concession of a free hand in Europe to any Great Power without regard for the effect on other peoples and without *quid pro quo* will never lead to anything but further demands. The other is that Britain can never be indifferent to the liberty of other European nations without in the end endangering her own.

Sir Eyre Crowe's Memorandum

This chapter has been written round a text provided by the prescience of Lord Grey. I would like to end it by quoting from one of his subordinates in the Foreign Office two passages of a famous memorandum

which emphasize the maxims I have mentioned. At the time when it was written, this memorandum so much impressed Lord Grey that although its author, Mr. (later Sir Eyre) Crowe, was not as yet one of his principal advisers, he circulated it to the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet.

In it Sir Eyre reviewed the relations of Britain, Germany and France from the early 'eighties, when Bismarck first launched his country into colonial and maritime enterprize. The statement must be read in full for its impressive force to be realized, and I can only quote the conclusions here. This is what Sir Eyre wrote about the policy of unilateral concessions :—

“There is one road which, if past experience is any guide to the future, will most certainly not lead to any permanent improvements of relations with any Power, least of all Germany, and which must therefore be abandoned; that is the road paved with graceful British concessions—concessions made without any conviction either of their justice or of their being set off by equivalent counter-services. The vain hopes that in this manner Germany can be ‘conciliated’ and made more friendly must be definitely given up. It may be that such hopes are still honestly cherished by irresponsible people, ignorant, perhaps necessarily ignorant, of the history of Anglo-German relations during the last twenty years, which cannot be better described than as the history of a systematic policy of gratuitous concessions, a policy which has led to the highly disappointing result

disclosed by the almost perpetual state of tension existing between the two countries. Men in responsible positions, whose business it is to inform themselves and to see things as they really are, cannot conscientiously retain any illusions on this subject."

Sir Eyre went on to explain that this conclusion must not be held to apply to Germany more than to other Powers, and he took in further illustration the case of France :—

"A reference to the official records will show that ever since 1882 England had met a growing number of French demands and infringements of British rights in the same spirit of ready accommodation which inspired her dealings with Germany. The not unnatural result was that every successive French Government embarked on a policy of 'squeezing' England, until the crisis came in the year of Fashoda, when the stake at issue was the maintenance of the British position on the Upper Nile. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs of that day argued, like his predecessors, that England's apparent opposition was only half-hearted, and would collapse before the persistent threat of French displeasure. Nothing would persuade him that England could in a question of this kind assume an attitude of unbending resistance. It was this erroneous impression, justified in the eyes of the French Cabinet by their deductions from British political practice, that brought the two countries to the verge of war."

The memorandum ends with a reference to the effect on Anglo-German relations of the Algeciras Conference, the results of which had been received in Germany with great discontent :—

“ The time which has since elapsed has, no doubt, been short. But during that time it may be observed that our relations with Germany, if not exactly cordial, have at least been practically free from all symptoms of direct friction, and there is an impression that Germany will think twice before she now gives rise to any fresh disagreement. In this attitude she will be encouraged if she meets on England's part with unvarying courtesy and consideration in all matters of common concern, but also with a prompt and firm refusal to enter into any one-sided bargains or arrangements, and the most unbending determination to uphold British rights and interests in every part of the globe. There will be no surer or quicker way to win the respect of the German Government and of the German nation.”

It is sad to remember that the author of this memorandum, whose wife was German and who himself had German blood in his veins, was denounced as a pro-German in August, 1914, and had his windows broken by a mob.

One other quotation I feel bound to make because it shows that Sir Eyre Crowe's interpretation of “ British rights and interests ” had none of the narrowness which is generally attributed nowadays to our pre-war imperialist diplomacy :—

“ The general character of England’s foreign policy is determined by the immutable conditions of her geographical situation on the ocean flank of Europe as an island State with vast oversea colonies and dependencies, whose existence and survival as an independent community are inseparably bound up with the possession of preponderant sea power. The tremendous influence of such preponderance has been described in the classical pages of Captain Mahan. No one now disputes it. Sea power is more potent than land power, because it is as pervading as the element in which it moves and has its being. Its formidable character makes itself felt the more directly that a maritime State is, in the literal sense of the word, the neighbour of every country accessible by sea. It would, therefore, be but natural that the power of a State supreme at sea should inspire universal jealousy and fear, and be ever exposed to the danger of being overthrown by a general combination of the world. Against such a combination no single nation could in the long run stand, least of all a small island kingdom not possessed of the military strength of a people trained to arms, and dependent for its food supply on oversea commerce. The danger can in practice only be averted—and history shows that it has been so averted—on condition that the national policy of the insular and naval State is so directed as to harmonize with the general desires and ideals common to all mankind, and more particularly that it is closely identified with the primary and vital interests of a majority, or as many as possible, of the other nations. Now, the first interest of all

countries is the preservation of national independence. It follows that England, more than any other non-insular Power, has a direct and positive interest in the maintenance of the independence of nations and therefore must be the natural enemy of any country threatening the independence of others, and the natural protector of the weaker communities."

It may be observed on this that the diplomacy of which Sir Eyre Crowe was so distinguished a representative did not in the end prevent the outbreak of war. I can only reply that the fault lay not in Grey or Crowe but in the slow minds of their colleagues and their countrymen. Despite all that Grey could do, we shut our eyes to the estimate which Germany had formed of us from our domestic controversies between 1907 and 1914, and nothing opened them until she was irrevocably committed to war.

Even in the days of burning crisis we maintained our unconcern. "Where is Serajevo?" said one. "No business of ours," said another. "Germany won't fight *us*!" said a third. And after all that it cost us, some of our wise men would have us show the same unconcern with Europe and its troubles again!

CHAPTER III

LAW VERSUS LIFE

WE must then take our stand for justice and liberty in Europe, as we have always done ; but we cannot be content with a definition of justice which suggests that democracies are always right and dictatorships always wrong. We are not to be one-eyed crusaders, but we are still less to be quitters, with a suicidal belief in " safety first."

What we need, therefore, above all else is some code which will guide us honourably between the perils of isolation on the one hand and the perils of unlimited obligation upon the other. We must retain an absolute discretion to act as we think right in the circumstances of the time when any crisis arises short of an armed invasion of France. On that we are pledged in advance, and no British Government could hesitate to honour its bond.

But our discretion must base itself on principle. We do not mean to abandon Europe to the pressure of armed and arbitrary force, because the liberties of other nations are, in the long run, inseparable from our own. Nor do we mean to be dragged into conflict over every challenge to the *status quo*, or to resist on principle every claim advanced by Governments of a type which we dislike.

National Unity of Thought

Our aim in foreign policy is frequently defined in two contrasting fashions—on the one side, the defence of British territory and the pursuit of British interests ; on the other, the maintenance of justice and peace. Conservatives are constantly accused of a material concentration on the former, to the exclusion of broader and more human ideals such as those embodied in the Covenant. There are, of course, many differences of approach to the problems presented by foreign affairs ; but we are, I suggest, inclined to exaggerate the extent of those differences in the wordy warfare of Parliamentary life. On the essentials there is in reality but one mind in this country, or at any rate such unity of thought and feeling that dissenters at either extreme are few and insignificant. The true substance of that unity can, I suggest, be established by a very brief analysis.

Take, first, the phrase “pursuit of British interests.” What are British interests ? They include, of course, the defence of British territory, the expansion of British trade, the security of British investments ; and these things are not of purely material importance since material prosperity is essential to safeguard our political ideals and raise our standards of life. But the greatest British interest is something much higher and broader than these material needs ; it is the defence of our political ideals, our spiritual heritage, our whole way of life. It includes, in fact, what is sometimes

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represented as a different and contrasted ideal—the maintenance of justice and peace.

We want, all of us, to ensure and establish justice ; we also want to outlaw the rule of armed and arbitrary force. Recent events have given a terrible reality to the dangers which menace European peace when a single nation sets out to secure what it regards as justice by the ruthless use of military power. So grave is our present situation in that respect that I shall have much to say, later in this book, about the character of the challenge which it presents to all democracies—and more particularly to us. But before I come to that aspect of the European scene, I would ask my readers to consider for a moment whether the idea of justice which we have pursued during recent years is compatible with peace.

A Glance into Recent History

For many years after the Great War Europe was controlled by the victorious States, of which the most powerful were Britain and France. Of the other two Great Powers in the heart of Europe Italy was discontented from the outset with the results of the war to herself, while Germany lay crushed and impotent. It was always our desire during that period to lend Germany a helping hand and to make her new-born democracy a success, while France believed it essential to the future peace of Europe to hem her in and keep her as weak as possible. Our Alliance with Japan was determined early in the nineteen-twenties, but for

nearly ten years after that Japan gave no sign of inordinate ambitions in the Far Eastern area. The people of the United States had meanwhile retired into their enormous shell and looked at Europe with distaste as a defaulting debtor.

Italy had become a dictatorship just four years after the Armistice, but there again there was no sign for a long period of ambitions displeasing to her old allies or prejudicial to the authority of the League of Nations. It was not till the nineteen-twenties had expired and the nineteen-thirties had been ushered in by an unprecedented economic blizzard that the upholders of democracy and the League were summoned to face a sudden, formidable and rapidly enlarging challenge. The development of that challenge is so recent that the main events composing it are in everybody's memory. In the space of seven short years the world has passed from shock to shock, from disarmament conferences to universal rearmament, from a peace to a war psychology.

It is, alas, only too easy to find scapegoats for this sinister transformation, and as a nation we have not been remiss in telling the chief delinquents our candid opinion of them. But protests and lectures have availed us nothing, and it has become obvious to all but the Pharisaic and utterly uncomprehending that the nations which have earned our displeasure believe themselves to have right on their side as wholeheartedly as we do. There is a famous saying that the tragedy of history lies, not in the struggle between right and wrong, but in the struggle between right and right. So far as the convictions of the chief disputants are concerned, the truth of that saying has never been more signally attested.

Two Unknown Correspondents

A recent article of mine on the war menace now confronting the youth of all countries evoked two letters from unknown correspondents which seem to me typical of two widely different currents of opinion. One of them is from a Communist, who asks why I cannot see that the clash of imperialisms makes a certainty of war and therefore of the ultimate world-wide establishment of the Communist State. The other writes :

It is not the glory of the State that impresses the youth of to-day but the economic question. . . . The things that stand out in the mind and imagination of thinking people are magnanimous acts such as were shown to the people of South Africa after the Boer War. A like magnanimity shown to the youth of to-day in setting their feet upon a path which shows some ray of hope at the end of it would do much to make them more conscious of their civil duties and their future well-being.

I agree with my Communist correspondent that the clash of unregenerate imperialisms is bound to cause another war, if their differences cannot be progressively reduced—though I see no solution in the Communist State. I agree with the other that the economic causes of war go very deep and that magnanimity is essential on the part of rich and powerful States.

But neither of my correspondents seems to me to get to the root of the matter. Of course, if you are a Communist, you do not mind the growing menace of war between imperialist and capitalist States because you believe that only when these have wrecked each other will Communism be able to enter into its own and build a new heaven and earth. To those, however, who want to avoid war and catastrophe for their sons and daughters, like most sensible people in this country, that is not a satisfying doctrine. They would rather find some means of reconciling powerful and discontented States than gloat upon them as the architects of a new chaos, whatever might finally emerge upon the face of the waters after a generation or so of world-wide misery and collapse.

My other correspondent speaks a language with which all reasonable people amongst his elders will sympathize, but he does not seem to me to recognize the extreme difficulty of persuading large sections of opinion in this country to make economic concessions or to show any form of magnanimity to nations which they condemn as "law-breakers." By far the largest export of this country since the dictatorships became strong has been denunciation, and I am so deeply convinced of the danger of continuing to abuse other countries without understanding them that I beg for attention to a less Pharisaic view of international sins and sinners. We shall do nothing for peace and a great deal for war by simply making broad our phylacteries against peoples we regard as transgressors, and I would plead that now at long last, when the habit has brought us to the edge of another Armageddon, we

should abandon it in favour of a more understanding attitude towards them.

What is Justice?

The difficulty we have to face is an old one. It is that of reconciling Law with the underlying forces that cause the strains between growing and changing States. The map of the world cannot in our time be "settled" with the finality which seems desirable to nations with a wide command of all they want. As a great world Power we have all the economic opportunity, the range of political influence, the scope for spreading our language, our culture, and our political ideals that any Power, however great, could possibly desire. We are Dives; and like all rich men we naturally take the view that the present distribution of the world's good things is just. It is therefore easy for us to be on the side of Law in international affairs, and no foreign Power can have any doubt upon the importance we attach to it. Justice and the Rule of Law are the constant burden of all our comment on world events, and we are quick to resent any suggestion that our devotion to them is not entirely disinterested.

Yet, if peace be our object, we must seek to understand why appeals to the text of treaties and even of the Covenant have of late fallen so frequently on deaf ears. Justice and Law may seem to us synonymous, but others may think them poles apart. Mere legalism is therefore of little avail in dealing with those peoples whose griefs and ambitions threaten war. They cannot

possibly regard us as disinterested, and they are bound to resent any method of approach to their problems which insists upon the Law as it stands and ignores, as they think, the true merits of the case. Mr. A. P. Herbert was not the first reformer to maintain that Law and Justice do not always coincide, and that the former may be at variance with the primal rights of vigorous, healthy, and even virtuous life. It is considerations of that same fundamental kind which have brought the Law into conflict with Life in the great field of international affairs.

Take, for instance, the salient example of the sanctions imposed upon Italy for aggression in Abyssinia. There is really no question that the motive inspiring our public opinion in that case was a passionate desire to vindicate the Law and also to be just; but there is equally little question that our eager support of the League was not regarded as genuinely disinterested by the three chief Powers which have challenged it. That is made clear enough, so far as Germany is concerned, by the following passage from Professor Roberts's book, "The House that Hitler Built":—

German diplomatic opinion believed that the impositions of sanction against Italy was a mere experiment "to see if they could be employed against us later on." It is amazing how frequently this view was expressed to me by officials and industrialists in Germany last year. My statement that sanctions were disinterestedly imposed in that particular case was nowhere believed. The German point of view

was that we were trying out a new weapon in international affairs, and that the weapon failed.

We were, of course, and it had. But that is not the important point. What really matters is that while we believed ourselves to be making a genuine effort to vindicate Justice and the Law without resort to arms, other Powers like Germany believed us to be experimenting with a cheap and easy way of protecting our own interests.

Covenant and Status Quo—Japan's Case

It is not the general view in this country that all persons who have favoured divorce reform are libertines; nor should it be our view that all Powers are brigands who have quarrelled with the Covenant. The grain of the Covenant is straight and true for much of its length, but it contains a fatal knot at the very point where the strain upon it was bound to be most fierce. That knot lies in the provisions which guarantee the territorial integrity and political independence of every member State and make change almost impossible without a breach of the Covenant itself.

Speaking for Canada when those provisions were on the stocks Sir Robert Borden pointed out that those who signed them were pledging themselves to the view that all existing territorial delimitations were just and expedient; that they would continue to be so indefinitely; and that they should therefore be

maintained indefinitely, unless altered by general consent. He therefore objected to them as a bar to change and evolution which the forces of Life would inevitably upset. They were, in fact, framed for the "Haves," and were bound in time to be challenged by the "Have-nots." "It is impossible," he said, "to forecast the future. There may be national aspirations to which the provisions of the Peace Treaty will not do justice and which cannot be permanently repressed"; and events have proved him a thousand times right. The text of the Covenant made it inevitable that, in the view of some nations, Law and Justice should conflict.

The first challenge to Law in the name of Justice was, in fact, made, not by one of the nations penalised by the war, but by one of the victorious Allies, Japan; and her case is worth consideration since her increasing success has brought into being an alliance against the League which the League itself is powerless either to reconcile or to defeat. The population of Japan proper now exceeds 70 millions. Full census records do not go very far back; but the total seems to have doubled by natural increase in about fifty years, and it is still increasing by over a million a year.

An island race, with natural resources inferior to ours, the Japanese have had problems very like our own to solve in the face of far greater difficulties. We trebled our population in the nineteenth century and in that process launched upon that epic of industrial and commercial expansion, combined with annexation, emigration, and political development, which has given us the British Empire of our own time. The Japanese islanders have been forced into expansion by the same

compelling needs, directing and organizing their racial energies with extraordinary speed for the supply of wants which those very energies had created and tended constantly to increase. To a large extent they modelled themselves upon us, and for a considerable period we and the United States alone of Western peoples showed sympathy with them and gave them support.

They needed it. Their first real drive for expansion took the shape of war with China over the peninsula of Korea. In seven and a half months China was forced to cede Korea and a section of Manchuria as well; but immediately three great Western Powers, Russia, France, and Germany, stepped in and demanded that those territories should not be permanently occupied. It was their own interests, not those of China, which prompted this *démarche*; but Japan was forced to comply. In the words of the Mikado's rescript, she "yielded to the dictates of magnanimity and accepted the advice of the three Powers." It was, however, inconceivable that the Japanese people should not dispute the obvious designs of Russia upon Korea. In 1902 an Alliance was negotiated with England, and it was strengthened in 1905. Meanwhile Russia had been defeated both by land and sea in a gruelling war, and in the Treaty of Portsmouth, with the help of both England and of the United States, Japan secured a definite foothold upon the mainland facing her shores. She repaid their friendly support by loyalty to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance throughout the Great War.

Events have moved rapidly and inexorably since that time. In 1921 England terminated the Alliance, largely through American influence—an unhappy sequel

to the co-operation between East and West which both England and the United States had hitherto pursued. It is said that Japan might have secured all that her people needed by diplomatic means; but the proposals of the Lytton Commission, sent out by the League in 1932, hardly justify that view. What is certain is that from 1921 onwards she determined, at all sacrifice, to make herself mistress of the Far East, and that her military leaders have now taken the bit between their teeth.

It is a tragedy that the movement of expansion in Japan has taken on a violent racial colour and an attitude of blind indifference to world opinion which her elder statesmen can no longer control. Nothing can excuse the ruthlessness of Japanese arms; we can only lament the fact that, for the time being, her soldiers are out of hand and strive to restore the authority of her longer and wiser political heads by showing that we will recognize her claim to a sphere of economic and political influence in her own quarter of the world, if she on her side will show a decent regard for the legitimate interests of other Powers.

It will certainly not help us to achieve that result if we aim at stiffening Chinese resistance to every Japanese claim. The Chinese are a great people and they are not at all likely to be dominated by Japan for very long. China's inarticulate masses are probably not unwilling to accept some modicum of order and peace from any hands that will bestow it. The Normans conquered this country once, and gave it the efficient administration which it had lacked since the departure of the Romans six hundred years before. They also gave it unity and a consciousness of its power, with the result

that after England had been ruled for a time by Frenchmen she turned the tables and for a much longer time herself controlled a considerable part of France. China in the same way can very well look after herself, and we should not degrade our very real concern in her welfare by using it as a screen for our own interest in Chinese trade, great and legitimate though that may be.

The most important of all considerations in regard to the Far East at the present time is to prevent it from becoming once again a cause of enmity between European Powers. For that some moderation of view towards Japan is indispensable, and we can understand the need of it better than more isolated statesmen in the United States. All countries that are part of Western civilization, whether they be European countries or not, are deeply concerned in preventing another war between the great European Powers. There is, of course, no comparison whatever between the Japanese case now presented to us with all its rage and ruthlessness and the problem of Anglo-German relations; but we have to guard against the danger of language or action on the Far Eastern crisis which might divide Western civilization against itself. The European issue is grave enough in itself and we cannot afford to have it still further complicated by the violent passions unleashed in the Far East.

Our duty therefore is, as my young correspondent suggests, to consider what magnanimity can do, particularly in the economic field, with the difficult issue which Germany's aspirations present to us. I do not myself believe that peace will be endangered by the creation of other great economic systems comparable

in range and power to the British Empire and the United States. On the contrary, I believe with my Communist correspondent that efforts to arrest that process will involve us all in chaos and collapse. There is no reason why the establishment of other great systems like our own should multiply the causes of war or block the growth of prosperity. They will need to trade with the rest of the world as much as we do ourselves ; and if they have within their boundaries that width of economic opportunity combined with security which we ourselves enjoy, they will be readier than small and struggling States to relax the multitudinous national controls and barriers which are now stifling recovery.

But if that is the way to give our civilization security and peace, we shall have to admit that Sir Robert Borden was right and free ourselves from the legalism and rigidity of the Covenant. We can do nothing to prevent another vast clash of arms, fiercer than has ever raged before, if we are to be bound at every step by a document which allows no play to the true diplomacy of peace.

At the very outset of her interesting book *Blackmail or War!* Madame Tabouis quotes a great French ambassador, Jules Cambon, in similar comment upon the Covenant. M. Cambon's view, expressed when that instrument was first being shaped, is so closely in accord with Sir Robert Borden's and with the argument which I have been endeavouring to present that I must take it from Madame Tabouis and reproduce it.

The famous Frenchman, with his lifelong experience of international relations, noted from the outset "a

certain inconsistency " in the objects which the Covenant was intended to serve. It was, on the one hand, intended to maintain peace by punishing aggression—aggression, that is, against the settlement of international boundaries and relations imposed by the Treaties of Peace. But, on the other hand, it was to be " a medium for promoting progress in accordance with the aspirations of the various peoples and the advance of democracy in the world." These two different conceptions were, he held, incompatible and therefore bound to clash.

" Man," [he said], " has not changed as much as is supposed. He obeys the same instincts as he always did, and the League of Nations would come to grief if it presumed to thwart those movements which are nothing less than the outward sign of growth on the part of nations. The difficulty will always be to decide whether these ferments which, from time to time, disturb the face of the globe are a useless and sterile disturbance, or whether, on the contrary, they are the birth-pangs of something vital.

" Hence, the League of Nations will not be able to follow rigid ideas or dogmatic principles. As it is pursuing a political aim, it will have to maintain an attitude in accordance with the rules of politics. It will have to take hard facts into account : it will have to realize that the prime need of nations is to establish their security ; thus, by the very nature of things, it will have to try and reconcile the new outlook, to which it owes its very existence, with the needs of the special agreements which nations may be induced to make among themselves."

Who can deny that the French statesman, like the Canadian, accurately foretold the necessity with which events have now confronted us?

The Outline of a Code

I suggest, therefore, that the first point in a new and less rigid code of policy than we have recently pursued should be to recognize that no treaty settlement can permanently determine the mutual relations of a number of nations, large and small, for the unanswerable reason that growth and change are essential conditions of life. The attempt of the Holy Alliance to keep Europe "settled" on lines convenient to itself after the Napoleonic wars broke down rapidly before the mounting strength of nationalist and democratic feeling. The same process of change and development is now transforming our own post-war "settlement." We cannot arrest it any more than we can arrest the growth of plants without making life itself our enemy.

The second point should be to admit the faults in our own post-war "settlement," and particularly the most glaring of those faults, which was to stereotype the division of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire into a constellation of new and sovereign States with inadequate economic resources and, in many cases, indefensible frontiers. Some statesmen of the nineteenth century said with truth that if the Austro-Hungarian Empire had not existed it would have been necessary to invent it. We have ignored that truth for twenty years, and have now to deal with the conse-

quences, of which the absorption of Austria by Germany is only the beginning.

The third point should be to strive our utmost to secure that the process of growth and change proceeds in an orderly manner and that all nations who wish to do so preserve their essential liberties. If diplomacy, conciliation and compromise are to yield at every point to force or the threat of force, the European garden will no longer be a garden but a jungle. The law of the jungle will supersede all other law, and European civilization will be overwhelmed in another Armageddon, for at some stage or other freedom will fight for its inheritance.

The fourth point should be to realize that the division of Central Europe into a number of small and independent States, endeavouring to be economically self-sufficient without regard for their neighbours, is incompatible both with stable peace and with economic recovery. There are far too many national frontiers in Central Europe armed not only with military defences but with customs houses, prohibitions, exchange restrictions, quota formulæ, and all the other stifling inventions of economic nationalism. Far better for those States themselves and for the world in general that they should play their parts as free partners in some larger political and economic organization with an adequate command of markets and raw materials.

Far better, too, that Germany, as the dominant Power in Central Europe, should become the head and centre of such an organization by peaceful means than that she should use her enormous military strength for the forcible absorption and Nazification of her weaker

neighbours. War is a certainty if means cannot be found to persuade Germany that the diplomacy of force will encounter resistance so formidable that she has nothing to gain by challenging it, and also to convince her that she can obtain without force the markets and raw materials which are necessary to enable her to convert her present war economy, with its concentration on warlike production, into a more profitable peace economy.

We cannot in fairness deny to the German people, with all their industry and organizing capacity, a sphere of political and economic influence comparable to that enjoyed by the other greatest Powers—Britain, the United States, France, Italy, Japan and Russia. To attempt to do so would be to make an explosion inevitable.

But we can and must do our utmost to ensure that the process by which they acquire such a sphere is peaceable and diplomatic in character, and that the smaller nations which form part of it preserve their essential liberties. It is not our business to resist change and development, but it is our business to resist the destruction of freedom.

Fifthly and finally, we must beware of thinking, speaking and acting as though we had one code of behaviour towards democratic States and another towards dictatorships. Justice and fair play are due to every nation, whatever their systems of government. We shall not preserve the peace and therewith the liberties of Europe by a policy which suggests that what we regarded as unjust to the German people while the Weimar Republic survived is no longer unjust

now that the Weimar Republic has collapsed. There must be equal justice and consideration for every State, whether we admire its constitution or not.

The case of Austria aptly illustrates, I think the wisdom of such a code.

If we had not at an earlier date denied to Austria the right of political and economic co-operation with Germany, there would have been no demonstration of force to secure her union with the Fatherland, and she would have retained her national freedom and character. The provisions of the treaty settlement in regard to Austria were indefensible, but we stood by them blindly in the name of international law till they were trampled underfoot by the armed might of Nazidom. The consequence has been, as Mr. Chamberlain said, a withering shock to confidence throughout Europe.

I am not seeking to defend Herr Hitler's action in Austria ; it was openly contemptuous of our standards of international conduct and also of our regard for freedom. But anger against the course which he took should not blind us to our own unwisdom in failing to promote at an earlier stage a solution of the Austro-German question which would have satisfied Germany's legitimate claims without putting an end to Austria's national existence. In that case we refused even to the Weimar Republic a modification of the peace settlement which was reasonable in itself and fully in accord with the main principle of " self-determination " which we had professed.

It is true that Nazi Germany has now turned Austria into a German province and that the distinctive character of a very ancient seat of European culture may in

consequence be lost. But that does not make our previous action right. We must be wiser and more just in regard to the other national questions such as the future of Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary and Rumania which the collapse of Austrian independence has brought to the front.

CHAPTER IV

THE ECONOMIC ASPECT

THIS is not a book on trade, and my observations on the subject in this chapter will be a mere footnote. I insert it only to show in what way, according to my view, we may best achieve an economic détente with autarkic systems like that of Germany, and I hope that gentle readers who boggle at economics will not, at this point, cast the book aside with dudgeon but proceed with fortitude to the next chapter.

There are many who contend that economic agreement may put an end to political antagonism. So it might if only politics did not always bar the way against it. The fate of M. Van Zeeland's proposals is a sad illustration of that fact, which he himself very clearly anticipated; and some more hopeful method of approach to economic issues seems indispensable if we are ever to solve them.

A Conflict of Philosophies

The first essential in economics, no less than in politics, is surely to accept the fact that the great Powers are now inextricably wedded to different philosophies, and that no progress will be made towards understanding between them so long as the free-exchangers believe that

they can convert the closed-exchangers to their particular view of international good behaviour.

This tendency in our present discussion of economic policy seems to me to need close watching. The difference between autocratic and democratic systems of government is spreading into the field of trade and finance, so that we are witnessing a struggle between nationalist and internationalist principles of economy which seems as likely to determine the issue of peace or war in Europe as the more obvious and advertised conflict of political "ideologies."

The course pursued by Britain in dealing with that conflict will probably be decisive. At the moment we are the arbiters. Are we to commit ourselves definitely to the nationalist or else to the internationalist school of thought? If so, what in either case will be the probable consequences? Or can we mediate between them? And if this latter alternative be the wiser, how are we to pursue it?

There can be no question, to begin with, of the governing objects of our policy. We desire to maintain the peace of Europe, to re-establish reasonable conditions for trade and business in the Far East, to reduce the competition in armaments, and to secure for ourselves that steady expansion of production, trade and services which is necessary to enable us to reduce taxation while maintaining our defences at the necessary level and meeting the many social requirements of our people. In particular, we desire to prevent, or at least to protect ourselves against, the worst effects of violent fluctuations in the trade cycle.

It seems that at present the weight of opinion amongst

the advisers of the Government is in favour of what may be called the broadest possible internationalism. For this there are many reasons. That movement represents, in the first place, a natural reaction towards the system under which we pushed our trade and built up our wealth before the Great War. It reflects, in the second place, the apparent interest of the great financial organization which centres in London. It is, in the third place, prompted by a very reasonable antagonism to those extremes of nationalism which have blocked the natural movements of trade and put great nations, even in time of peace, into the strait waistcoat of a rigid war economy.

The dictatorships are committed to autocratic control of the economic life of their respective countries, and they undoubtedly believe that there are strong influences in international finance which are set upon their destruction. They are also afraid of giving scope to anti-patriotic economic activities, including the rapid movement of funds from country to country, such as those which have added so greatly in recent years to France's financial difficulties ; and they have certainly not overlooked some similar factors which contributed to the depreciation of sterling. Their credit depends upon rigid autocratic control, and they see danger in any attempt to modify it.

Our interests and preoccupations are different. We dislike the autocratic systems almost as much in the economic field as in the political, and there are very strong influences at work in the same direction in America. It is indeed at this point that political predilections enter the field of economic policy, and foster the

idea of laying economic as well as political siege to the principle of autocracy, particularly in Germany. There is, in fact—to use continental terms—a broad and determined movement of the Left against the Right in the economic as well as in the political field of international relations.

All this is very natural. But it raises anxious questions. We have to beware of pursuing political antagonisms under the guise of economic policy and of masking as international conciliation a movement which in reality seeks to undermine régimes distasteful to us in other countries. We have, moreover, to assess the probabilities. Is there any reasonable hope of persuading great autocratic Powers like Germany, Italy and Japan to compromise in any serious degree the national economic policies which they regard as necessary to their credit and to their central ideal—full national self-determination?

There is no doubt, of course, that great pressure may be exercised upon them; but they will inevitably regard such pressure as an attack upon their national systems of economy which would, if successful, extinguish them and all they stand for. Will that make for peace rather than for war? And if we engage in a conflict between incompatible economic philosophies which will divide Europe on much the same lines as the conflict between the political “ideologies,” shall we in fact be taking the surest road towards an increase of our export trade and more stable prosperity?

It seems to me hopelessly pessimistic to contend that without a return of the world in general to the freer methods of trade and exchange on which we thrive

before the last war we shall have neither peace nor stable prosperity. The pre-war system of world economy involved practically uncontrolled competition in world markets ; and an accentuation of that process at the present time would be much more likely to foment international hostilities to the point of war than the reduction of competition by the partial canalization of trade between homogeneous groups, each seeking the maximum development of mutually beneficial exchange within its own sphere.

In the political field we have renounced the idea of making other Powers conform to our principles of government. A similar renunciation would be no less wise in the economic field, if peace is to be maintained. It is not to our interest to join and promote an alignment of Powers into Left and Right by economic any more than by political criteria. Our policy should be to live and let live, seeking in both fields to enable different systems to co-exist peacefully rather than accentuating differences.

Germany is bent on securing her own sphere of economic and political influence in Central and South-Eastern Europe, with ramifications to South America. Japan is pursuing a similar policy in the Far East. We must naturally try to secure the best conditions possible for our own trade in the German and Japanese spheres of influence ; but we shall do better for ourselves by recognizing the primacy of each of those nations in its own sphere than by striving to force upon them an economic philosophy which the powers of the day in both countries are bound to resist to the uttermost. The wisest course is to leave them the gardens they

believe essential to their existence and to cultivate our own to the best of our great ability.

By a policy of moderation and tolerance we shall do much for the maintenance of peace and something for the improvement of general trading conditions; and if we cannot hope to recapture in any sufficient degree the foreign markets we have lost, we can recoup ourselves in those which will respond most readily to British plans of development—that is, in the markets of the Commonwealth, the Colonial Empire and India.

Speaking side by side with Hitler at the great demonstration arranged for him during his visit to Berlin, Mussolini used the following language (*Times* report, September 29th, 1937):—

“Germany and Italy follow the same goal in the sphere of economic autarky. Without economic independence the political independence of a nation is doubtful, and a nation of great military power may become the victim of an economic blockade. We experienced this danger in all its directions when fifty-two nations assembled at Geneva decided upon criminal economic sanctions against Italy. In spite of all inducements Germany did not take part in the sanctions. We shall never forget that. (Loud applause.) That is the point at which, for the first time, the existence of a necessary co-operation between National-Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy appeared. What the world now knows as the Rome-Berlin axis arose in the autumn of 1935, and has worked in the last two years for an ever-stronger *rapprochement* of our peoples.”

It is abundantly clear from this that Mussolini regards economic autarky as fundamental. So does Hitler. So do the leaders of Japan. The United States will never seriously modify their addiction to high protection and self-sufficiency. The universal denunciation in the United States of the recent Sugar Convention, which was negotiated as the first step in a new policy of international co-operation, and also the announced determination of the American Government to build and maintain, at whatever cost to the taxpayer, a powerful Merchant Navy, are indications of America's intense predilection for nationalist and autarkic policies. France also is now so deeply committed to advanced social policies and experiments that she will be driven inevitably towards a closer and more self-sufficient economic régime on the approved nationalist model. Russia, on the other hand, was the first exponent of economic autarky, and remains absolutely devoted to it. With Great Powers thus set in a contrary direction, the movement towards a freer world economy, however diplomatically conducted, will give us little of the trade expansion which we require; and if pressed contentiously, it might bring the conflict between different systems of government to the point of war.

People keep on writing to *The Times* urging our Government to discuss Germany's economic grievances on the assumption that Germany may be persuaded in return for raw materials, trade openings, loans and colonies to place her economic system under international control, or at least to expose it once again to the economic pressure of other Powers. I cannot see any possibility of understanding with her on those lines,

and in this matter she is the Key-Power. A stable understanding, fertile of good, can, I believe, be achieved by conceding to her, on certain conditions, her own definite sphere of political and economic influence; but in no other way. The moral surely is that economic recovery will move faster by the organization of economic groups and spheres of influence than by the pursuit of an open world economy; and we must make the most of our own sphere, the British Empire, ramifying, where desirable, to the sterling *bloc*, if we are to accord similar spheres to other great nations.

I have no doubt myself that the next stage in human development lies in the organization of a few strong politically and economically homogeneous groups, and that peace is much more likely to be maintained by accommodation and mutual tolerance between such groups than by any other method. I am also absolutely convinced that if the Powers which really constitute European civilization do not agree to co-operation and mutual tolerance on the group system, so that the present division of Europe into narrow and selfish tribal units more numerous than at any time since European civilization was first created by the Roman Empire may be drastically corrected, Europe will be doomed to a long period of war and revolution.

Finally, I am persuaded that, if Britain is to play her part in saving European society from disintegration, she must hold by her own group or Commonwealth or Empire, and permit the growth of other Empires with tolerance.

The Most-Favoured-Nation Principle.

The question is—by what method?

A large body of opinion in this country, which includes the Federation of British Industries and many Chambers of Commerce, is now convinced that more may be achieved in the reduction of trade barriers by a modification of the most-favoured-nation principle as hitherto applied than by any other means. The world is already moving in that direction, and it certainly presents a method of coming to reasonable terms with autarkic systems which should be impartially examined.

This view has not at present gained much ground in official quarters in this country, which adheres firmly to the principle in its traditional form; but our Government has accepted or even suggested modifications of the principle in individual cases, and the United States have gone even further by the device known as the “principle supplier” method.

The United Kingdom has treaties embodying most-favoured-nation agreements with forty other countries, most of which may be determined by notice within periods varying from three to twelve months. This network is so wide, and has hitherto proved so valuable, that any wholesale denunciation of the treaties on which it depends would constitute a serious risk for British trade. No Government is therefore likely to consider it unless convinced that any immediate loss would be compensated by a great all-round improvement in trading relations. But all that would be necessary

to inaugurate a broader trade policy would be an experimental modification of the principle, carefully designed to remove its defects without depriving British exports of its great remaining advantages.

The traditional most-favoured-nation principle was established when Great Britain practised free trade. In those days her market was open, with small exceptions, to all comers, and she could therefore prove that the consideration which she gave was fully equal to the consideration which she claimed. This she can no longer do, for she has embraced a policy of mutual preference with the Dominions, and has thereby established within the circle of the Empire an inner most-favoured-nation system with preferential duties to which foreign countries are not admitted by their most-favoured-nation agreements.

The fact that foreign countries, including the United States, have, despite some protest, accepted this modification of the traditional most-favoured-nation principle, proves that they still derive advantages from the most-favoured-nation clause in their treaties with Great Britain which they do not desire to forgo. But that does not affect the point that by exempting preferential agreements within the Empire from the general bearing of the most-favoured-nation clause, Britain has to some extent impaired the influence which she ought to exert towards better trade relations throughout the world.

Imperial Preference is now a settled feature of British trade policy, and there is, therefore, justice in the claim of other countries that we should accept a modification of the most-favoured-nation principle which would

meet the not unnatural objections to our present attitude in regard to it.

They press for this all the more strongly because they believe that our present insistence on practically universal most-favoured-nation rights, so far from making for freer international trading relations, is encouraging the use of quotas and exchange control to stifle or canalize trade, and actually preventing the lowering of tariffs between countries anxious to increase their mutual trade. As examples of this, they can quote the fact that in recent years negotiations at Ouchy between Belgium and Holland for the formation of a low-tariff group were defeated by the refusal of the United Kingdom Government to waive their most-favoured-nation rights, while similar negotiations at Oslo between the Scandinavian countries were circumscribed. It is also said that the known attitude of the United Kingdom Government has stood in the way of the realization of various projected regional arrangements in Europe. Why, they ask, should we claim the right to set up an inner most-favoured-nation circle of our own without conceding the same liberty to other peoples?

I do not believe that the British system of Imperial Preference acts in limitation of world trade or to the permanent disadvantage of other nations. The British Empire must always trade very largely with the rest of the world, and itself constitutes the greatest of all world markets. Any policy which subserves the prosperity of that circle increases its general purchasing power and must in consequence make it a better customer for the exports of other nations. This wider value has in fact

been claimed for Imperial Preference by members of the present Government, and the argument is generally endorsed by the business community, which is now accustomed to arrangements and cartels for the delimitation of markets and convinced that such arrangements give encouragement and security for greater production. But if we claim this merit for the British system of Imperial Preference, how can we in reason deny it to the policy of other countries which desire to promote each other's prosperity by mutual arrangements of the same character?

All Powers are, in fact, breaking the spirit of their most-favoured-nation agreements while purporting nominally to observe them. Great Britain has, unquestionably, infringed that principle by exempting from its operation all preferential duties within the British Empire, and she has also connived at its infringement by other countries in certain provisions on which she has insisted in recent trade agreements. The United States upholds the principle, but has found it necessary to limit its operation by closer tariff schedules in all or nearly all the treaties which have recently been negotiated. Other Powers have gone even further in defeating it by the establishment of quotas, exchange control and bartering arrangements. A principle which is so widely honoured rather in the breach than in the observance must surely have outlived its utility, at any rate in its original form.

We are at present engaged in trade negotiations with the United States in the hope of setting a good example to other nations. But whatever we do, we shall not convert the autarkic systems to our standpoint. Might

it not then be better for the United States and Great Britain to modify their most-favoured-nation rights in such measure as would permit other countries to set up preferential systems in their own areas and thus to pursue their own welfare on a basis comparable in some measure to that enjoyed by the United States within the Union and its affiliated territories, or by Britain within the circle of the British Empire? If it be the case, as most people now agree, that British Imperial Preference stimulates world trade as well as British trade by expanding the capacity of Britain and the Empire as a world market, the same consideration must presumably apply to other co-operative economic systems of the same broad character.

Business opinion is now largely agreed upon the tariff system which Britain would need to maintain if this view of policy were adopted.

She would have a three-decker tariff. The first or lowest scale of duties would be the Imperial Preferential tariff conceded to nations of the British Empire. The corollary of this would be the waiving on her part of her most-favoured-nation rights in favour of any group of nations which desired to set up a system of special mutual preference within their own boundaries.

The second or most-favoured-nation scale of duties would be conceded to all nations who were prepared—subject to their own systems of internal preference, if such existed—to concede most-favoured-nation rights to her. There would be no exclusions in this second or intermediate tariff; it would be open, on the same terms, to all comers, though its application would no doubt be regulated, as at present, by trade agreements.

The third or highest scale of duties would be the General Tariff, imposed on all countries which did not concede her most-favoured-nation rights.

My submission is that this conception of British tariff policy would not only facilitate the negotiation of a comprehensive trade agreement between Britain and the United States, but also that it would enable those two countries to approach other Powers for a freeing of exchanges and a reduction of trade barriers with far better prospects of success. The first step on which agreement between the United States and Britain would be necessary would be a joint declaration of readiness to waive most-favoured-nation rights in order to enable other Powers to set up their own economic spheres of influence.

Such a declaration by the two richest Powers in the world would assuredly make a greater impression on other countries, small or great, than any bilateral trading agreement since it would show that Britain and America were no longer determined to insist on maintaining for themselves a highly protected or preferential position within their own wide boundaries, without regard for the comparatively limited economic scope of other Powers; and it would probably do much more to initiate a reduction, here and there of, tariffs and trade barriers.

We cannot reasonably expect the abandonment by other countries of economic policies which are part of their national philosophy; but co-operation between powerful and not incomparable economic groups is a practical goal for British and American policy, while mere opposition to, or denunciation of, the principle of closed economies leads nowhere.

This argument formed the theme of a leading article in *The Times* of New Year's Day ; and since *The Times* has from the outset given its powerful support to the project of closer Anglo-American co-operation in the economic sphere, I feel I must quote it in support of my argument :—

“ Previous attempts at economic appeasement (it wrote), have come to nothing largely through the failure to realize the limitations imposed by changed conditions. As things are to-day, and as they are likely to remain for many days to come, there is nothing to be gained by railing against economic nationalism and preaching a return to the old doctrines of unrestricted trade, doctrines which as a matter of fact were never applied in practice except by Great Britain and one or two other countries. But if no advance is possible along what may be called the cosmopolitan road, there still remain promising opportunities in the way of international co-operation, co-operation, that is, between national economic units, each recognizing the right of the others to maintain their own individual characters and to pursue their own national interests, but willing to work together for their mutual advantage.”

The “ cosmopolitan road ” certainly leads nowhere in present conditions ; but if Britain and America could agree, not merely on a declaration of principle, but also on setting up a most-favoured-nation scale of duties in their respective tariff systems, and in declaring that most-favoured-nation scale open to all nations in return

for similar concessions without prejudice to special preferences within certain accepted groups or areas, they would make a signal contribution to the improvement of international trading relations. They should also, of course, accord the most-favoured-nation scale over the widest possible range of articles to each other.

It cannot surely be either wise or just to persist at this extremely critical moment in what other countries regard as a "dog in the manger" attitude towards the most-favoured-nation problem. Germany is, in point of fact, already making mince-meat of the traditional most-favoured-nation principle in Central Europe, and we seem to be pursuing in trade affairs the same policy of "too late" which unhappily marked an earlier stage of our political relations with her. The business world has been thinking hard about the matter for a considerable period, and it is much to be hoped that its ideas may now make some real impression on the Government.

CHAPTER V

THE THREE LIONS AND NATIONAL DEFENCE

THE unwillingness of the Opposition in this country to negotiate for peace is due to a deep conviction that to come to terms of any sort with dictatorships is to endanger the future of the working-class ; and it is unhappily for the same reason that it suspects all thorough-going proposals for national organization for defence. It is these profound obsessions that saddle the Socialist party with the obvious inconsistency of preaching a policy of war while refusing to co-operate to the full in preparation for it. The two lines are manifestly incompatible, but they are pursued concurrently none the less ; and they are reinforced by a considerable section of middle opinion which is still convinced that the League would enable us to dispense with armaments if only we were sufficiently loyal to it. All this constitutes a powerful slogan—"the League, Democracy and Peace."

No man who knows this country is likely to underestimate the strength of a campaign which appeals to its strong idealism and also to the sense of solidarity in the working-class. It is a crusade which weaves together two mighty strains of feeling and creates a burning demand that neither the principles of the League nor the hard-won freedom of workers throughout Europe shall be trampled in the dust. The dictatorships have challenged both these strains of feeling ; they are therefore the enemy and must be wiped off the earth.

That is why indignation has been so fierce in Parliament over what is called "the farce of non-intervention" in Spain. Speakers on that theme would have little use for strategic considerations if British interests alone were concerned, but they do not disdain to talk power-politics for their own ends. The dictatorships, it is felt, must be contained and defeated wherever they intervene in order that their hold on their own peoples may be destroyed. That, and nothing less, is the Socialist goal, because it is genuinely believed that in no other way can European democracy and all it means for the working-class be saved.

League feeling and working-class feeling therefore combine in the demand that we should set to work to revivify and reorganize the League as a Holy Alliance of democratic States. Both parties to the combination, moreover, maintain that such an alliance of free nations, by pooling its military strength and treating an attack on one as an attack on all, can ring the adversaries of democracy and the League with a circle of irresistible power.

It is because they regard the Government as opposed to a system of collective security in this form that many of our people are slow to accept the necessity of further rearmament and of organization of the whole people for home defence. They suspect Conservatives of secret Fascist leanings towards Germany and Italy, and also towards the Franco régime in Spain. I have been told more than once by representative holders of that view that there is nothing, even to national military service, which they would not approve, if only the Government were wholehearted in support of "democracy and the League."

There is so great a need, at present, of unity, both in policy and defence that I wish we could all subscribe without reserve to this call for a crusade. But there are two objections to it which seem to me insuperable.

The one is an objection of principle. If we stand for anything in the realm of international affairs, it is surely for the principle that nations should choose their form of government for themselves. It is true that we ourselves are wedded to a democratic form ; but we are not entitled to say that our form shall be the only form. We contravene our own principle if we do.

The Statute of Westminster has enthroned that principle as the charter of the British Commonwealth, and we would not dream of seeking to undermine the constitution of any British Dominion, even if it chose to alter its present form of government, since we hold that every nation in the Commonwealth should determine its own form of government without advice or intervention from the other members of the family.

It may, of course, be maintained that dictatorial forms of government, having been imposed upon their peoples by force, do not represent the popular will ; but that is dangerous ground. For the time being at any rate the dictators have a tremendous hold upon the hearts and minds of their peoples ; and though we may regard those peoples as misguided, we are certainly less entitled than their own dictators to dictate to them. We would not dream of such action within the British Commonwealth, and we should not, *a fortiori*, dream of it elsewhere.

The other objection is one of policy, and it is equally strong. If it be really true that authoritarian and demo-

cratic States cannot coexist in safety side by side, and that the one must destroy the other in order to survive, then war is inevitable and statesmanship may as well throw in its hand. But it is not in the British temperament to subscribe to extremism and defeatism of that kind. A great majority of us will never accept anything as inevitable until it has actually occurred, because we have an ancient and saving faith in the virtues of compromise.

Peace would indeed hang by the slenderest thread if we adopted as a crusade the policy of blocking the dictatorships at every point in the hope that they would fall. But there is surely a middle way between blank opposition and blind subservience to their aims ; and it is, as always, that middle way which the bulk of British opinion will wish its Government to pursue. No one who has read the second chapter of this book can accuse me of failing to realize that there are limits beyond which compromise cannot be rightly or wisely used ; but there is no reason as yet to despair of agreement within those limits, if we are strong enough to resist all pressure beyond them, whatever betide.

There is, however, little hope of converting the Opposition to this more moderate view. They hold their own with deep conviction, and they are obviously entitled to do their utmost to secure a majority for it in the next Parliament. Meanwhile the Government is bound, while it remains a Government, to pursue its own more diplomatic course.

But is that difference of policy, profound though it may be, a reason against complete co-operation in the

field of defence? The Opposition's foreign policy is even more dependent than the Government's upon military strength and power of resistance to attack; and they must surely wish to be in a position to implement their policy to the full, should the next election seat them on the Treasury bench.

There has, moreover, long been in this country a patriotic tradition that party differences should not be carried to a point which endangers the security of the State. Cannot that tradition be revived at a moment when all we stand for may be jeopardized by our internal disputes?

The present Opposition are certainly not less patriotic than the Oppositions of the past; and they would, I believe, be willing to co-operate all along the line in the acceleration of rearmament and the organization of defence were it not for three powerful considerations which stand like lions in the path. These are:—

1. A belief that we can dispense with further rearmament if we pledge ourselves to an automatic system of collective security under the League.

2. A strong conviction that the sacrifices demanded respectively of wealth and labour for rearmament are disproportionate.

3. An equally strong suspicion that all proposals for national organization against war are "Fascist" manœuvres in disguise.

It is now so certain that without wholehearted co-operation between the parties in the essentials of defence we shall find ourselves compelled to choose between

humiliation and war at some not distant date, that it would be blind and insensate folly for Government and Opposition alike not to look these lions firmly and frankly in the face.

The First Lion.

I have already dealt with the danger of war inherent in using a system of collective security under the League for blank opposition to the dictatorships. If collective security for democracy is to take that militant turn, it can certainly not help us to dispense with accelerated rearmament.

What concerns me here is another idea—namely that collective security in a purely defensive form might so minimize the risks of war as to make further organization for defence in this country unnecessary.

The Opposition, for their part, are sincerely convinced that peace is now precarious mainly because our diplomacy in the last few years has been short-sighted and weak. “Let us,” they say, “show more courage and declare that we will stand unconditionally by other members of the League on the principle that an attack on one is an attack on all. Let us, in other words, declare our unswerving and unconditional fidelity to the obligations of the Covenant. Then there will be no need for further organization for defence or for increased expenditure on rearmament.”

If this were indeed sufficient to banish the danger of war, there would be little ground for further anxiety, since declarations are easy to make.

But would such a declaration really suffice to transform the European stage? An Opposition, having no responsibility, is entitled to press that view. The Government, on the other hand, is differently placed, and it has a knowledge of the situation, with all the possibilities it contains, which no one outside its inner circle can share.

I am supremely anxious to avoid unnecessary controversy about a past which we cannot recall, and I shall therefore not attempt to argue whether or not a different course of action in recent years might have averted the danger in which democracy now stands. Having dealt briefly with the central difficulty of League policy in a previous chapter, I will leave it at that. What matters is the present, which is what it is, however we may view the past.

The question to be settled now is this—can we, as things stand to-day, trust to collective security under the League to vindicate the liberties of Europe and maintain the peace without organizing ourselves as a nation for all the hazards of war?

The strength of any system of defence, collective or otherwise, is the strength of its weakest point. If then, we are to weigh with open eyes the strength which we should ourselves contribute to collective security under the League, we must consider candidly where our weakest point lies. That is the crux of collective security, as it is the crux of our present plans of rearmament.

We certainly cannot be defeated at sea; the Navy is now a sure guarantee against that. If time, moreover, were given it, it would be able once again to impose a paralysing blockade. We cannot, furthermore, be reduced to surrender by the defeat of our Army, what-

ever role it might be called on to undertake. However we fared in land warfare on the continent, our power of resistance could not by that means be rapidly destroyed. There remains the air. Our Air Force is not yet as large as it should be ; but it is very powerful, and it could not be driven from the air by any enemy, provided its sources of supply remained intact.

There is, however, another aspect of modern warfare to be faced—bombardment of this country from the air. Whatever the efficiency of the Air Force, its fighters and interceptors could not prevent a steady sequence of enemy bombers from getting through to London, our munition centres and our ports. Whatever the number and quality of our partners in collective security, they would be equally powerless to prevent the bombardment of Britain from the air.

We and our allies would, of course, bomb the enemy country in return, and great damage would no doubt be done. But no suffering or loss at home would prevent a great military nation in conflict with us from concentrating every resource he possessed upon destroying our power of resistance by attack from the air. That is our weakest point, and he would strike at it remorselessly because his one hope of victory would lie in smothering, shattering and annihilating our cities, industries and ports before he himself began to feel the strength of our blockade.

Against that danger, which may well be mortal, we are at present very inadequately organized, and collective security cannot assist us to fill the gaps in our defensive system. We must do that ourselves, and till we do it, we shall not be partners in a system of collective security

upon whom other nations can confidently rely. Our weakest point is precisely that where allies can give us least help.

This is a challenge to our traditions, our habits, our whole way of life and thought. We cannot be content with declaring in reply to it that our spirit and capacity for organization will be demonstrated as triumphantly in the future as in 1914, if war be forced upon us. The conditions of war have changed very greatly to our disadvantage since 1914; and though we continue to ignore that fact, other nations are vividly aware of it.

Our supreme object, moreover, is not once again to demonstrate our quality in war, but to demonstrate it here and now in sufficient time to discourage others from making war upon us. Lord Halifax put his finger upon the crux of the whole matter when he said, not long ago, that "we shall be judged, not by our policy or by our Government, but by ourselves. If we as a nation can convince others of our purpose and of our moral and material strength, our policy will succeed." That is as true of collective security as of everything else.

For that reason it is not sufficient that we should announce our belief in collective security, and leave it at that. We need all the friends we can muster; but they will rally to the stronger camp unless assured by manifest proof that the British people are ready in advance to face the actual ordeal of war. Nor will it serve to protest our fidelity to the League of Nations and the principles of the Covenant. We must be organized as a nation to make those protestations good even though it be our homes and our civilian population which have to face the worst of the ordeal.

Writing as I am in April, I cannot feel that the Opposition in Parliament have faced these issues as they really are. A Parliamentary people is apt to over-rate the virtues of eloquence as compared with action, and is therefore liable to be misjudged by those who attach no importance to words unless a readiness for any consequence be manifest behind them.

Even our best friends in Europe harbour some doubt about us on that point. They know too well that any British Government, whatever its political colour, is bound to consider first and foremost the probable reaction of war upon the soil and population of Britain when any crisis arises which involves the possibility of war. It will look, as it must, upon Britain's weakest point, and it will falter in its attitude if Britain is not ready at that weakest point for all eventualities.

The question of policy, together with the value to be attached to our declarations, turns therefore upon something more fundamental than the sincerity of our attachment to democratic principles and to the League, deep and strong as that unquestionably is. Are we sufficiently alive, all Europe asks, to the new peril from the air which menaces both the mechanism of the island and its civil population? If we are alive to it, how is it that we are not organizing more energetically and effectively against it?

Useless, then, to rely on collective security unless we have done our utmost to ensure our own security at home against air attack. That is a truth which the Opposition must face without subterfuge since it is a dominant and inescapable truth for their own policy no less than the Government's. I do not say that they may not

persuade the country to keep up its illusions, if they are wedded to that course. No one who remembers our unawareness of danger in the years immediately preceding the crisis of 1914 can fail to realize that our capacity for illusion is great. But they will pay and, what is worse, the country will pay for their action by appalling sacrifice, if they succeed in persuading it that collective security can relieve it of the need of organizing, through and through, for its own defence.

The Second Lion.

There is much firmer ground for the conviction that wealth and labour are at present being called upon for unequal contributions to rearmament. This second lion is a formidable animal and deserves sincere respect.

So long as the rearmament programme proceeded without disturbance of normal industrial conditions, it was difficult to see how the Government could do more than keep a watchful eye upon its cost. I do not know to what extent its methods of scrutiny were effective, but they were certainly based on the best available advice. The need for wholesale acceleration, however, introduces a new phase ; and if Labour is to be invited to modify the rules by which the various trade unions protect their interests, it is entitled to demand that the other side of industry also shall subordinate its interests to national necessity.

Mass production is needed on a hitherto un contemplated scale, and it cannot be introduced without altering the conditions of labour and reducing to some

extent the market value of skilled work. This is an ancient field of controversy, and no solution of its problems will be possible without genuine co-operation from Labour, which will quite rightly insist that there shall be no exploitation or abuse of concessions made in the cause of national defence.

The question of profits is, of course, bound to form part of the assurances demanded, since the memory of war profiteering still stinks in the nostrils of the country—and not least in those of ex-Service men; but that is not the most difficult aspect of the problems to be solved. Far more critical is that of the future status of Labour when, in due course, the need for its assistance grows less. There is, I am sure, a widespread feeling that Labour will be “done down” in the long run if it renders its indispensable service to national security without safeguards against loss of status and all which that may involve when the crisis of security is past.

It is also, I suggest, essential that more consideration should be given to the Labour point of view in future arrangements for financing the increase of expenditure on defence. Our whole system of national defence is so appallingly costly by comparison with that of all other great nations except the United States that we shall have to consider every possible means of cheapening it, if the strain—as is only too probable—is protracted over a considerable period of years. It would be insensate to stint the social services in preference to finding ways of reducing the cost of defence without impairing its efficiency, and the thing can unquestionably be done if we give our minds to it in a spirit of true patriotism without prejudice.

There are many factors in that expenditure which will call for review—the way in which we raise the money, the way in which we allocate it, the question whether in all respects we get our money's worth, and the question also whether the payment of taxation is not in some respects more ruinous to ourselves as well as the State than other forms of service.

A very capable Liberal writer, Mr. C. G. Coulton, has recently republished with a striking new introduction a book which originally appeared in 1917 and which is well worth attention at the present moment.¹ Here is a passage which is signally opposite on the question of the cost of national defence :—

“As the popularity of the Swiss Army is based upon its thoroughly national character, so its efficiency is based upon both. Enlisting all the business forces of the nation, it naturally summarizes all the business ideas. It would be difficult to find any commercial or industrial concern which is run upon more strictly practical lines than the Swiss army. The time spent in training is not very much more than the theoretical training course of a British Territorial; but the average work done in this time is, beyond all dispute, at least twice as great. One very good rough test of business management is the test of economy. Switzerland spends on her army 8s. 10d. per head of the population, or less than half what she spends on her education, which is probably the most thorough in

The Case for Compulsory Military Service, by C. G. Coulton, Litt.D. Camb.; Hon.D.Litt. Durham; Hon.LL.D. Edinb.; F.B.A.; Fellow of St. John's and Hon. Fellow of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge; 4s. 6d. post free from the author at 72 Kimberley Road, Cambridge.

the world. The cost of each Swiss soldier in 1907 was only two-thirds of a British Territorial; yet this included heavy expenditure on fortifications, and a far more up-to-date armament than has ever been supplied to our Auxiliary Forces; and this difference in economy has since rather increased than diminished. . . .

. . . . Finally, nothing but the finest business organization could have carried the Swiss army so triumphantly through the strain of the war. In the first week of August, 1914, the Swiss called out and armed a total force which, in proportion to the British population, would amount to more than three million men; yet all who, like myself, actually saw the events of those days, were astounded at the small amount of dislocation which this effected in ordinary civil life."

I shall have more to say in a later chapter on the Army question, which cannot be solved entirely on the Swiss plan in view of the oversea duties which our Regular Army has to perform; but I quote Mr. Coulton here in order to show that we may with advantage give some further study to the reasons why our defence expenditure is so high by comparison with its results.

The cost of our present Territorial Army is, in any case, but one small item in the enormous and growing total of our Service Estimates, and there are other aspects of that total into which Labour may prefer to look. All that I am here concerned to suggest is that we shall have to examine far more closely than in the past the demands which national security is now making on labour, the tax-payer and our reserve of national wealth.

The Third Lion.

Our third lion is the fear of Fascism as a latent Conservative plot. This also is a formidable lion which we must face with frankness and real understanding, since he will undermine our security if we cannot conjure him from the path.

Accelerated rearmament is indispensable, but it will not by itself, any more than collective security by itself, ensure our liberty and peace. Something more is necessary, and the fear of Fascism is causing us to hesitate most dangerously in facing that unpleasant fact.

The need for accelerated rearmament is generally recognized, and some people, who daily diminish in number, believe that it will be enough. Will it?

The Navy must certainly be able to hold its own not only in Europe but the East, and must, therefore, be steadily expanded in agreement with the United States. If numbers are to be taken as the test, our Air Force is not equal to Germany's even when reinforced by France, and it also must, therefore, be very greatly increased. When, four years ago, Lord Baldwin announced the decision of the National Government to create an Air Force which should, in first-line strength, be equal to any "within striking distance of our shores," it was generally assumed that the plan was feasible and would promptly be carried out; but after four years of effort our arrears of strength are more, not less, than they were at the start. Manifestly that must be put right.

Both the Regular and the Territorial Army are still very much under strength. We must have an adequate strategic reserve of Regular troops for the Middle East and East; our whole strategic position, including the protection of naval and air bases, necessitates it. This Regular Army need not exceed the establishment already approved by Parliament; but it must be up to strength, fully equipped, and furnished with its own Army Reserve, so that the Territorials may not be drawn on for reinforcements and thereby rendered useless as a Second Line for their own essential tasks.

The Territorial Army itself, moreover, should be brought up to full establishment, and the strength of the anti-aircraft formations, artillery and searchlights, considerably increased. The territorial character of these latter units is essential to the proper discharge of their task. They must live close to their war stations, and be ready for duty at very short notice.

The armed strength of Germany rises steadily every month, and no policy of collective security or alliances can avail to keep the balance in Europe if we do not overtake in some important measure the present disparity between ourselves and her in air power and in ground defence against air attack.

But the expansion of our armaments, though urgent, and indispensable, can never be in itself a sufficient policy, and we must strive in some other way to arrest the growing strain of competition if an explosion is not to take place.

Everyone knows that the universal race in armaments must at some time, if not arrested, end in almost universal war. It is already setting up a strain upon the internal

economy of every nation ; in some it is causing actual and daily hardship and therefore deep unrest.

We are at present more fortunate than others in that respect ; but social progress is bound to suffer in this country as in others if expenditure on armaments is indefinitely prolonged without reduction or relief.

That prospect is hateful—a challenge to every progressive instinct we possess.

In Germany the population is already under great stress, particularly in the middle class. In order that Hitler may reduce this strain, he must be convinced of two things—first, that the limits of forcible action in pursuit of German aims have been definitely reached ; and second, that markets are available to him which will enable Germany to change over from war production to peace production without widespread unemployment and discontent.

Both processes are equally essential if we are to prevent war ; but the first and most important is to convince the German Government that war cannot possibly pay, since a knock-out blow directed against this country has no sufficient chance of success.

This last consideration is the factor which will turn the scales between peace and war. We cannot afford to spare any effort which will weight the side of peace.

It is therefore a dangerous weakness in our present plans of rearmament that they will do little by themselves to remedy our greatest weakness in defence. Develop and equip the Fighting Services as we may, they cannot guarantee the enormous target presented by Greater London or our packed munition centres or our crowded ports against massive, repeated and remorseless air

attack. We have to prevent an assault upon our people and vital centres, launched in successive waves at uncertain intervals with a frequency based on enormous manufacturing power and ruthless military resolve, from crippling our power of resistance and forcing us to surrender before our own strength is fully deployed and the naval blockade enforced. For that the civilian population must be organized and, where necessary, trained. We cannot play our proper part in Europe until that organization is complete.

It is at this point that the third of our obstructing lions bestrides the road to security and peace. The fear of Fascism in this country may seem ridiculous to many of us ; but let us not under-rate it on that account. The very fact that Labour is realizing that neither collective security nor rearmament will suffice alone or even together to make this democracy safe is causing a profound anxiety lest we should have to meet totalitarianism by copying the totalitarian States.

There are, of course, many Socialists who believe that it will be necessary for their own purposes to strengthen the authority of the Executive over Parliament and the electorate. Sir Stafford Cripps, for instance, has made no secret of that. But thousands of working-men who may not subscribe to authoritarianism on the Left are afraid that the cause of social progress may be jeopardized by authoritarianism on the Right ; and they therefore respond to the cry of " conscription " which is raised against all organization of the nation as a nation for defence.

A letter published by the *New Statesman* in its issue of April 2nd is a good example of the feeling that exists,

since it shows that the necessity for national organization is recognized even while its consequences are feared. This is what the writer, Mr. F. L. McIlraith, said :—

“I am convinced that before very long Labour will have to settle the question of participation in some form of national service, and I am equally convinced that Labour can only save itself and the nation and peace, by adopting a bold, courageous, and positive attitude towards an extremely dangerous situation.

“Already in certain influential quarters there is talk of national service—the nasty word ‘conscription’ is avoided—either for industry or for defence, or both. Convincing arguments are being adduced which go to show that if we are to carry out our programme in a specified period, Labour will have to be diluted in certain industries, and trade union standards broken down.

“All kinds of inducements will be held out to the workers to fall in with these necessities of the moment, and easily awakened emotions of love of country, liberty and democracy will be played upon. During the last war ‘for democracy’ the Defence of the Realm Act was passed, but this time it may be invoked in peace. Lord Beaverbrook, in an article in one of his newspapers, has already suggested its rival.

“The great danger is that organized Labour through its leaders, whose patriotism has always been their strong point, will ‘fall’ for this ‘man to man’ appeal, and will agree to certain propositions without adequate guarantees. Then, having got the

workers where they want them, what assurance is there that the National Government and its powerful supporters will not, bit by bit, filch away all their rights, including the right of free association?

“Once having ‘mobilized’ the nation on a national basis, there would be nothing to prevent the authorities from introducing a mild form of Fascism, and proceeding to make a deal with Hitler and Mussolini, even perhaps agreeing to become part of a Fascist bloc.

“This is no pipe dream. Consciously, or subconsciously, influential sections of the upper classes in this country are sympathetically inclined towards Fascism. They may not admire the dictators individually, but instinctively they turn to them and their methods when the masses demand amelioration of their conditions.”

Mr. McIlraith happily went on to say that Labour “cannot reject out of hand any proposals of this character which the Government might make, since ‘the rank and file of the movement would never agree to that,’” But he insisted that the danger of accepting them is not to be conjured by the addition of Labour representatives to the Cabinet, and he outlined the terms which Labour should impose upon the Government.

I agree with him that the inclusion of Labour leaders in the Cabinet would give but little reassurance to the working-class. Trade Union leaders lose all hold upon their own people when they abandon Trade Union office for participation in a predominantly non-Socialist Government. Some other form of security must there-

fore be found, and Mr. McIlraith's suggestions are interesting.

So far as industry is concerned, they amount to this—that Labour representatives should be placed in every factory and workshop engaged in the manufacture of materials essential to defence, with access to the company's books. These "watchdogs" would presumably be appointed by the Trade Unions of the industries concerned. If they served as genuine representatives of Labour and not as political partizans, and if also they had the confidence of the men, both Government and employers might find the arrangement a convenient one for securing the co-operation which is urgently required. It is, at any rate, an indication of the kind of security which those who fear both "Fascism" and profiteering have in mind; and I am convinced that some means must be found for disarming those suspicions if our dangerous weakness and lack of organization are now to be repaired.

Mr. McIlraith went on to suggest that the Socialist party should undertake to co-operate on similar conditions, "if it is necessary to introduce national service to ensure adequate anti-air defence for our civilian population or to strengthen the armed forces"—the main condition being that "our selected representatives shall be appointed to each group or battalion."

"Our men (he says) will be the watch dogs of the people against domination by a privileged military class. They will also help to educate the people in the necessity for these measures to protect their lives and liberties. Above all things they will look out

for and report any attempt to impose Fascism from above.

“These terms may appear to you to be extremely drastic but they are dictated by the exigencies of a desperate situation. To us, Fascism, as represented by terror, concentration camps, and bombs raining down on defenceless towns, must be regarded as a pestilence—a horrible plague which, if we do not erect a sanitary cordon against it, will assuredly overwhelm us. You have failed to stem its progress; instead, by your dilatoriness, you have encouraged its advance. Now that you realise that you have blundered, you want us to help you. . . .

“ . . . Candidly, we do not trust you, but the situation is now so desperate that largely from motives of self-interest we will help you, but only on the above conditions. They are there for you to accept or reject.”

The suspicions which all this indicates seem to me much less important than the frank recognition which it implies that we have reached a situation in which it is necessary to contemplate the adoption of some form of citizen service for home defence. Given a common recognition of the need, we should be able to overcome the suspicions which surround it, however obstinate—and far better to face those suspicions courageously than continue to drift.

It is easy to concede the point that citizen service, whatever form it takes, must not be made a stepping-stone towards “Fascism,” by which is generally meant the seizure of authoritarian powers by the State; and

if I criticize the safeguards proposed by Mr. McIlraith, it is simply because they do not seem to me well conceived for that object.

When he speaks of "our selected representatives," he is presumably not referring to the Trade Unions, since they have no more right to demand control over national service groups or battalions than the Federation of British Industries or the Milk Marketing Board. He must therefore refer to the Socialist party—a proposal which is very hard to accept. For if one party is to have its special watchdogs over national service, so presumably must the others, lest national service be used for the seizure of authoritarian powers by the partizans of the Left. Suspicions can, after all, be harboured on more than one side of politics, and national service should be lifted clear of all suspicion, from whatever quarter it emanate.

This is unquestionably the most forbidding of the lions to be conjured from the path of national organization for defence. Jaurès would have made quick work of him, but we have no Jaurès in our midst. I cannot, however, believe that in this practical and courageous country an understanding between the parties may not be possible if we look our problem quietly in the face. The nation will always do what it is called upon to do, if the necessity is clearly explained to it.

Let us then consider what are the measures, great or small, that are needed to give us real security and strength.

CHAPTER VI

A REGISTER OF CITIZENS—I

THE PURPOSE IN VIEW

LET us be clear, to begin with, about the purpose to be served.

It is not a military purpose in the sense of preparation to make war abroad. It is purely and simply Home Defence—that and nothing else.

We have to make our industries, our ports, our transport system and our civil population so proof against sudden air attack that a knock-out blow cannot be aimed at us with any prospect of success.

For that national organization is indispensable, since it is our civil population and all our means of resistance which will be the object of attack. Everything will depend upon the ability of our munition industries, our ports and our transport system to survive bombardment from the air, however sudden and intense, and to continue steadily at work.

The problem is an absolutely new one, and we cannot solve it by pointing to past experience or precedent. The air menace has completely transformed our situation in the matter of national defence. Hitherto we have always had time to organize for war when war was actually upon us, because the Navy kept invasion from our coasts. But neither the Navy nor the Army nor the Air Force can prevent invasion by air. That

can be only resisted by the population as a whole. It may come upon us with little warning, and it will certainly do so if we are not organized in advance to resist it in our cities and ports, our factories and vital public services.

Power in the air is, of course, indispensable; we must expand it with all the rapidity attainable to the fullest possible extent. But air power can be quickly paralysed without adequate ground defence.

Our industries are closely concentrated, and they must be kept continuously at work, if the Air Force is to have the necessary supply of machines, spare parts, instruments, guns and ammunition to maintain it at full strength. Equally vital will it be to keep open the sources of our fuel supply.

The population itself must also be trained and ready for all the emergencies of modern war. Nine millions, or a fifth of it, live within fifteen miles of Charing Cross, and it is crowded round the various munition centres which are an essential factor in resistance to attack.

Finally the Territorial Army, which is responsible for ground defence against bombing aeroplanes, must be brought up to full establishment with adequate reliefs and reserves. It must, moreover, be ready on the spot where it is needed from the very outset of war, for the attack, if it is launched against us, will come at terribly short notice. Whether the warning be of days or hours or minutes, it will not be sufficient to enable us to organize when the danger is at hand. Any power which means to strike at us will take care of that.

It is well in this context to remember Hitler's speech to the League of German Girls at Nuremberg in March, 1937 :—

“If I should ever want to attack an enemy (he said), I should do it differently from Mussolini. I should not negotiate and make preparations for months. As I have always done, I should fall upon my enemy suddenly, like lightning striking out of the night.”

The suddenness of Hitler's armed descent upon Austria, with all its evidence of long, detailed and absolutely secret preparation, has given fresh significance to that formidable revelation of the mind behind the air power which he has spared no sacrifice to produce. Nothing will count with such a mind but the knowledge of a power of resistance so ready and complete that it cannot be intimidated by threats or smashed by unheralded attack.

Such power is vital to this country if it wants security and peace. Despite our diplomacy, despite our protestations, despite our economic power and despite our rearmament, things have been going from bad to worse in Europe for five irrevocable years. Something more is necessary if our voice is once more to count, and this—dislike it as we may—is it.

Many people in this country pin the label of conscription to every form of national organization for war, and condemn it therefore outright. Conscription, in its usual meaning, is universal military service, under which all able-bodied men enter the army as soon as they reach manhood, remain in it for a period of months or years, and thereon pass to the reserve. It creates a nation in arms, everything in professional and industrial life being subordinated to military need.

Very few believe that we need make any such military

effort in time of peace, though in war it would certainly become incumbent on us. The object of a Register of Citizens as here discussed is not to introduce conscription, but to make the necessity of conscription as unlikely as possible by strengthening the moral and material influences which constitute our power for preserving peace.

The idea that every suggestion for national organization against war is a disguised device for conscribing our youth as "cannon-fodder" for another imperialist war is therefore the very reverse of the truth.

The strongest motive in people like myself who are fathers of sons for advocating national organization in time of peace is a burning and consuming desire to save our sons from the ordeal through which we ourselves passed and to prevent another such awful waste of priceless and irreplaceable life.

We insist first and foremost upon the duty which middle age owes to youth ; and only when that has been fully recognized, upon the duty which youth owes to its country and itself.

I think the truth of these observations will be manifest to those who will trouble to read this chapter without prejudice.

A Register of Citizens.

The object of a Register of Citizens is to enable the whole of the adult population to be classified. It can, of course, be compiled without involving those who are classified in obligatory service of any kind. The object

of classification is to prevent overlapping, confusion and waste.

It is essential, if the country is forced into war, that all the necessary functions of defence should come into operation smoothly from the very first day or night, and that they should continue to operate efficiently, whatever befall.

The war industries—and more particularly the aeroplane industry—must be able to count on all their keymen and on sufficient labour of all kinds to raise production to the maximum and maintain it day and night. The anti-aircraft defence services—artillery, searchlights, balloon barrage and so on—must all be furnished with sufficient trained personnel, reliefs and reserves to keep them continually on guard. The ports and transport services must also have their full complement of men, and so must the great utility services—water, gas, electricity, etc.—which minister to the population of our cities and towns.

When all these have been provided for, the Air Raid Precaution services—auxiliary police, fire-brigades, first-aid units, repair and decontamination squads—must be manned and organized to function at the shortest possible notice and to remain on duty continuously for weeks on end.

There is bound to be confusion if all the men and women required for this wide range of duty are not classified and allocated in advance. It is useless, for instance, that the Territorials should draw recruits from the ranks of skilled labour in the munition industries, as they are certainly doing at the present time, since either the Territorial unit or the industry will find itself

short of indispensable men when the emergency arises. The same consideration applies all along the line. Men and women are volunteering promiscuously for Air Raid Precaution services who cannot be spared from other services of equal importance in war.

How, therefore, without registration and classification on a national scale is chaos to be avoided, if on any evening we find ourselves suddenly attacked? Is it not manifest that our organization must be ready and working in peace time in order to discourage a great Air Power from putting us to the test?

This is not a question to be answered by purely administrative arguments. We have to be certain that our defence organization will function with sufficient rapidity and ease to prevent a knock-out blow against our vital centres from taking decisive effect. But we have also to make sure that our capacity for instant and unyielding resistance is adequately appreciated by the military minds which may be weighing the prospects of attack.

We are not preparing an ambush against Germany, as many of her people accused us of doing in 1914. We are not seeking to tempt her on in order, once again, to knock her out. She misjudged us once, and we must not let her do so again, if our aim is not victory but peace. While, therefore, administrative considerations are important, they by no means constitute the whole case for national organization *in advance*.

Let us, however, consider the administrative side of our problem first. When once that is grasped, it will be easier to realize what is necessary for moral effect.

The range or war-work for which we must be organized is astonishingly wide in its scope. Every form of it, from the factory to the mine, from the roads and railways to the ports, from the gun and searchlight to the fire-brigade, from the throbbing skies above to the crowded cities beneath, will be national service which must be carried out. So great will be the demand for men and women in a thousand different ways, if war should break out, that liability to render service under Government control is certain to be enacted at once, and a Ministry of National Service created to allocate all the man and woman power available without confusion or waste. The necessary legislation is no doubt already drafted and ready in the hands of the Government.

I have already indicated in a few paragraphs the scope of the organization which we have to undertake. Let me now emphasize another point—namely, that it must be located and ready in peace-time at all the vital points if it is to perform its essential tasks.

Take the Territorial anti-aircraft units. They must, whatever it costs, be ready to come into action at the shortest notice wherever a vital factory or port or transport centre is exposed to attack, and that they cannot possibly do unless they are organized for instant action in advance and live *upon the spot*.

Readiness in that respect will be important enough, Heaven knows, as protection for the general population; but slaughter will not prevent our fighting on, so long as we can produce and import the necessary material. That is the vital point, and even a day's arrear in making sure of it may have calamitous results.

In an article published by the *Daily Telegraph* on April 5th, Sir Frederick Sykes, who was Chief of the Air Staff in 1918 and 1919, wrote as follows on the subject :—

“ As regards productive capacity, it is said that as at present organised our maximum output is about 200 machines per month, with an additional 100 per month from the shadow factories when these begin to function at the end of this year. Against this, Germany's production is stated to be 350 per month, with an emergency productive capacity of about 600.”

We must presume that our productive capacity is being greatly expanded, and that we shall be able at least to equal the German factories in output of machines and other necessities. But that is not the only necessity. Our aircraft factories are certain to be one of the first objectives for intensive bombardment, and they must be specially protected from the very first warning of attack.

Not only the actual factories but the staff and labour belonging to them which lives in crowded buildings round about. Much will turn in these centres on the resistance which is ready to meet the very first attacks. Steady output will be a matter of life and death, and we cannot afford to risk such damage in the first onset of war as will put our whole production back.

We are not, thank Heaven, a totalitarian State ; but war will be totalitarian war, and the whole able-bodied population in factory areas and ports must know what

it will have to do in emergency and be ready to do it at once. The risk will be enormous unless every such centre is organized to protect itself and has the necessary anti-aircraft services domiciled *on the spot*.

In the article already quoted Sir Frederick Sykes called attention to another critical point. It is calculated, he said, from experience in the last war, that casualties in aeroplanes will average fifty per cent per month. It is also the fact that even under war conditions aeroplanes cannot be turned out in less than six months.

It follows, of course, that we must have a large reserve of machines ready when war breaks out ; but it follows no less clearly that we must not allow our power of manufacture to be seriously reduced, for even the shortest period, much less stopped.

No chances, therefore, can be taken regarding the readiness of our Territorial anti-aircraft units from zero hour at all essential points. They must be so organized and distributed that they can come into immediate action wherever guns and searchlights are needed for the defence of munition centres, transport lines and ports.

The same quality of absolute preparedness is manifestly necessary in our Air-Raid Precaution services. It will not do to have people training in those services who will be required elsewhere when the guns go off. It will not do to have them half-organized and incomplete when the bombs begin to fall. They must be trained and ready *on the spot*.

How organization on this scale, which must be national in scope but narrowly territorial in location of personnel, can be achieved without compilation of a National Register no official spokesman has attempted

to explain. The Government is not asking of us the minimum which it knows to be necessary for security ; it is asking of us only as much of that minimum as it thinks the country will stand.

The situation between the country and the Government therefore resembles only too closely that which cost us a delay of two, if not three, irrevocable years in starting our rearmament. "We cannot," said the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence on a memorable occasion, "recall the years which the locusts have eaten." Are we to be told the same thing, two years hence, about national organization for Home Defence?

The present method or lack of method is intolerable. Despite the admirable manner in which people are volunteering for service of every sort, it is not giving us any adequate organization for Air Raid Precautions or for anti-aircraft defence. Too much is being thrown upon the local authorities, who are—and no wonder—completely out of their depth ; and the voluntary spirit is being widely discouraged because offers to many local authorities meet with no practical response. The country is anxious and willing to do anything that may be required of it ; but the local authorities in many instances potter and the Government hesitates. As a spectacle of political indecision and administrative half-heartedness, this is bad enough ; but as a moral spectacle, it is even worse. Nothing could be more stimulating to those who weigh other nations in military scales. Nothing could be more discouraging to our friends or more dangerous to peace.

There is but one way out of this political, administrative and moral morass. The local authorities cannot

lead us on it; it is national business. And the way itself, the only way, is national registration for home defence. Not a difficult matter. Let us consider it.

How a Register of Citizens May be Compiled.

A Parliamentary Register has long been established in this country, and it is revised every year. A form called "Form A" is sent out every summer to householders, and there is a penalty of £20 for failure to make a return. When the forms have been received, the Register is carefully scrutinized, and it is ready in late autumn for any election that may be due. I do not know whether the penalty of £20 often needs to be enforced. The annual revision of the Register is, in any case, pretty complete.

There can be no difficulty in enacting that another form shall be sent out with "Form A," provided that national opinion be in favour of the step. The information to be given in that second form might without inconvenience to householders cover the following points :—

1. Age at last birthday.
2. Occupation.
3. War service, if any.
4. Territorial Army service, if any.
5. If enrolled in any A.R.P. Services, which?

The return of this second form should be compulsory, like the return of "Form A." Any adult for whom a return of the second form was missing might very

properly be struck off the Parliamentary Register; but given national acceptance of the proposal—which is essential to its introduction—few would fail to give the information desired.

For no compulsion to service of any sort would be involved in making the return. The sole object would be to make classification possible in advance of war, and so to avoid overlapping, confusion, waste and perilous delay if war should come.

The first use which the Government would make of the return would be to mark off all those whose peace-time occupation should manifestly be continued in war, and to inform them of the fact. None such would be accepted as recruits for the Territorial Army or the A.R.P. services. That in itself would be an immense point gained.

The next use would be to study the local necessities of each district for home defence in the light of the Register. The Government would know what numbers were required in each locality to bring its Territorial anti-aircraft defences up to strength. The local authority would have the same information in regard to the local A.R.P. services. Having first eliminated all those whose peace-time work would be required in war, it would call upon the remainder for volunteers to make up the Territorial anti-aircraft units and the A.R.P. services as required. Only men above thirty should be taken into A.R.P. services. That is, I believe, already the rule.

I am convinced that on this method compulsion would not be necessary to bring all the essential services on a purely local basis up to full strength. The spirit of the country is ready for any organization of which

it understands the need. The great majority are only asking to be told what they can best do and how they can be trained.

The Prime Minister has stated on several occasions that the Government has no intention of introducing compulsory service, either military or civil, in time of peace. That should surely dispose of all suspicion that the compilation of a Register of Citizens would be "conscription" in disguise.

On the subject of such a Register he gave the following answer to a Parliamentary question in the House of Commons on March 23rd:—

"A scheme for compulsory national registration in time of war, if the Government of the day should so decide, has been in existence for some years. Proposals for compulsory registration in peace time have also been considered, but on balance the advantages to be derived therefrom have been found to be outweighed by the difficulties and opposition which would have to be surmounted."

That answer is, on the face of it, the kind of statement by democratic leaders which greatly encourages dictatorships. "Your Prime Minister," they would comment, "does not say that national registration is undesirable in advance of war. He merely says that the British democracy would not stand it, whether desirable or not. What national spirit that implies!"

I said, "on the face of it." The response of our democracy to such a statement by its Prime Minister must surely be to show that difficulties and opposition

are not to be feared. That would impress the dictatorships more than any number of speeches, protestations and offensive cartoons.

Speaking on April 8th at Birmingham, the Prime Minister made some further reference to the subject of registration, which seems therefore to be much on his mind. He spoke then of a voluntary register for service ; and though he welcomed the spirit which had prompted the proposal, he thought it might cause widespread disappointment because many people would register for work for which there was no necessity or for which they were not qualified.

That criticism is plainly sound ; but it bears no reference to a Register of Citizens for purposes of classification only, such as is here proposed. All appeals for volunteers will only add to the existing confusion until a classification by age, occupation and experience has been obtained. When once that classification is available, a very large proportion of the population will know on Government authority that their duty is not to volunteer for any special war-service but to continue in their peace-time avocations, because that is the best contribution they can make to national strength and security. The rest need only wait until an appeal is made in their locality for the war services that are still inadequately manned. The most suitable of the volunteers for each service can then be enrolled, and the rest will know that they have only to look after their own homes.

There can be no disappointment in that system. Volunteers will not be called for until training is immediately available in the service for which they are

required. Men and women throughout the country will know what is expected of them. The services will be so recruited that they can come into instant action without confusion or delay, and at last the country will be organized.

The Prime Minister added at Birmingham that the employment exchanges already have particulars as to the qualifications and whereabouts of 12,000,000 workers in various branches of industry. It is pertinent on this to remark that the census of 1930 gave 33 millions as the number of men and women in this country engaged in regular occupation of different kinds. If 12 millions are already sufficiently registered, well and good. But what about the 21 millions whom the employment exchanges ignore? If the Government thinks the smaller register useful, there must obviously be still greater value in a Register of Citizens which is complete.

Every official statement on the subject proves that, in the opinion of the authorities most closely concerned, a National Register will be indispensable in time of war. The Prime Minister himself said in the same speech at Birmingham to which I have just referred that the Government "have already prepared a carefully thought out scheme of compulsory registration which in an emergency could be put very smoothly and rapidly into operation."

The only open question is therefore this—whether we can afford to allow an interval of actual warfare to elapse before the Register can operate. Are we entitled to take that risk, and what may it cost us if we do?

I say with absolute conviction that we are not entitled to take it—not merely because the folly of doing so

must cost us heavy sacrifice if war is declared, but even more because our failure to organize in advance may turn the scale between peace and war. Our supreme object must always be to avoid war, if we can do so with honour and with security for the things which we value above peace because they are our life and breath and being.

However smooth and rapid the process of bringing the Register into operation under the strain of war, it cannot possibly be ready for the first few weeks. But those first few weeks may very possibly be the period of decision ; they will certainly be the period of greatest jeopardy.

No one doubts that if we can survive that initial ordeal, our war potential will develop steadily and the risks of our position decline. But why allow an initial risk to continue which must constitute a strong temptation to any who meditate war ?

The truth is that now, as before 1914, we are failing to take adequate account of the military mind. We look at everything from our own point of view, and we ignore the impression which we make abroad. " Here," our critics say, " is evidently a people which would rather be slack and comfortable than safe and strong. And yet it thinks itself superior to others who grudge no sacrifice to their national ideals ! "

It will not daunt a possible aggressor to know that he will have some weeks of opportunity while our organization is taking shape. That interval is precisely what he will count upon, if he decides to take the chance. Our business is to show him here and now that no such opportunity or interval will be given.

Can we not realize in time that national unity on this simple measure, which involves no breach in our principles, no change in our settled ways of life, will count more in foreign minds, and therefore in the maintenance of peace, than ships and aeroplanes and guns?

There are, I know, some people who say that they cannot support such a measure because they disagree with the Government's foreign policy. But a Register of Citizens is equally important and essential, whatever policy we pursue, and it is most important of all if a more effective system of collective security is to be organized under the League.

Disunity is, on the other hand, more dangerous than any foreign policy, however bad. If, then, we cannot be united on foreign policy, let us at least be united on this indispensable measure, which will reinforce enormously our influence for peace.

Napoleon said that the moral factor was always supreme when the odds seemed evenly balanced in war. It is equally supreme, when the scales are quivering uncertainly, in turning them against war. We can throw a moral factor of immense weight into those uncertain scales, but only if we decide to do so as a people united on that one factor, whatever our differences in other ways.

The scales are quivering, and will do so more and more. Can we hesitate, we who, alone in Europe, have power to steady them by a single measure which Parliament could pass in a day?

CHAPTER VII

A REGISTER OF CITIZENS—II

The Uses Which it Would Serve

THE Prime Minister has said that on balance the advantages of compulsory registration in peace-time "have been found to be outweighed by the difficulties and opposition which would have to be surmounted." Differences about foreign policy may play some part in that unhappy state of affairs; but they, I am sure, are not the main reason for which the idea of a Register of Citizens is disliked. The real ground of opposition, instinctive, deep and strong, is the fear that registration may be the prelude to "conscription," and that the Briton's liberties are therefore at stake.

"Conscription" is a vague and comprehensive term; but the ideas associated with it are not hard to understand. It suggests the introduction of an authoritative system of government under which the whole able-bodied manhood of the nation would be regulated and controlled by an all-powerful State. Labour would lose its charter, its great inheritance from years of struggle and endurance, and its freedom to better its conditions would be gone. Military service also would be compulsory, and a million or so of our youth would be trained as "cannon-fodder" for imperialist wars.

It is very difficult for masses of our people to think that liability for service to the State, and more particularly for military service, can be anything but a menace to the broad freedom which they prize. They will accept the necessity in war because another danger to their freedom will then be hammering at their doors, and the imminence of external peril overshadows any menace to freedom which they may suspect at home. But a nation under discipline in peace-time must, to their mind, be an easy prey to Nazism or Fascism or some other "ism" designed, as they believe, to serve the owners of property and keep the workers down.

There is a long history behind these prepossessions which needs to be understood, and those who plead for national service are mistaken in merely waving it aside.

The Limits of Compulsion

The first point to be grasped about them is that they are not by any means an objection to State compulsion for every purpose and in every form, but only to compulsion for certain purposes and in certain forms.

As regards youth, we have long accepted without question the principle of universal and compulsory education in the elementary stage. As regards the adult population, we accept it in our liability to pay the taxes, however onerous, which are demanded of us. In neither of these instances is the conscience of the individual parent or child or taxpayer consulted. The State imposes the liability on the authority of Parliament, and there is an end of the matter.

Individuals may think its action unjust or unwarranted, but conscientious objection is not recognized as a reason for exemption. Compulsion in these two forms has indeed become so much of a habit with us that no one questions its propriety or regards it as compromising the essentials of individual freedom.

We are many of us advocates of compulsion in still more far-reaching forms. A thorough-going Socialist may, for instance, think it absolutely right to conscribe a rich man's wealth to the point of complete expropriation, but wrong to conscribe a rich man's person for military or other service to the nation. An enthusiastic educationist may think it sound to extend the age of compulsory school-going to 16 or 17 or 18 or more (there is obviously no question of principle between one age and another), but may revolt against the inclusion of practical training for social service as a part of education.

It is, therefore, manifestly not the principle of compulsion to which they object, but only the purpose for which compulsion is used; and we have, in consequence, to consider why compulsion in some forms is regarded as essential to the proper exercise of freedom, while in others it is held fatal to it.

There is not much doubt about the answer which would generally be made in this country. Some circumstances in our history, together with the happy immunity from invasion given us by command of the sea, have formed in us a habit of mind upon these subjects which is not easily shaken.

In regard to youth, we have long used compulsion for the purpose of enlarging and enriching our children's

minds so that every boy and girl may have a fair opportunity in life ; but we recoil instinctively from any form of training which may teach them subordination to the State and make it easier for those in power to tamper with the Briton's birthright of individual liberty.

Similarly, in regard to the adult, with all our respect for property we draw a clear distinction between the individual and his possessions. To tax the rich is not to make them less free than others ; and we are, in fact, a nation of almost exemplary tax-payers. But the great majority of us would not take, even from the "idle rich," anything essential to their dignity and independence as human beings.

Subordination of that kind we will authorize only as punishment for breaches of the law and crimes against society. In all other respects our individualism and our respect for individual freedom are two of the strongest and most ingrained things about us, and we have carried them much further than other nations in regard not only to freedom but also to the rights of property.

This is a splendid tradition, and no one who understands the true foundations of our strength would seek to weaken it. Samson's hair may have seemed ridiculous and even unmanly to the Philistines, but for Samson it was everything.

Nor can it be maintained that our fanatical attachment to individual freedom has made us as a nation inapt to discipline. Our capacity for freely accepted discipline is beyond question, as witness our games, our trade unions, our political institutions.

Though he rules within the ambit of the Standing Orders which Parliament itself has laid down, there is

nowhere in any free assembly an autocrat more absolute than the Speaker of the House of Commons. He stands for the rights of the Commons House of Parliament, and we pay him an unstinted and almost unquestioning allegiance, guarding him by right of privilege against all external criticism.

Look also at the rapidity with which we organized our new armies after the outbreak of war in 1914. Compulsion was never necessary in order to secure men to fill the ranks of our fighting Services. It was necessary only in order to prevent unfairness, waste and confusion, and should for that reason have been imposed from the very outset of hostilities.

But not, I repeat, for any other reason. They little understand the British people who think it averse from discipline. Provided we accept it freely, we can make our discipline as thorough and as proof against all trial as any other people, however military in tradition.

The Island Sanctuary

The fact that we have long taken an attitude different from that of other European nations towards military service in time of peace is, therefore, not due to any lack of the military virtues in our race—our military history is proof of that. It is due to the fact that we live in an island sanctuary and have been proof against sudden invasion for generations untold.

For nearly nine hundred years—that is, ever since the Norman conquest—we have enjoyed a security given to no other European people, because, so long

as we held command of the narrow seas which lap the island, no foreigner could attack us upon our own soil or bring fire and slaughter into our habitations.

More than once that insular immunity has been challenged by a continental nation—first by Spain, then successively by Holland, France and Germany; but we have held the seas successfully against all challengers, and kept the wars in which we were constantly engaged at a distance from our sanctuary.

That long record of immunity from foreign wars on our own soil has had, quite naturally, several profound effects upon our habits of mind.

It has led us, in the first place, to regard a superior Navy as an all-sufficient guarantee of national security. The British people have never looked with jealousy or suspicion upon the needs of the Navy. The Senior Service has a place in their national affections which is founded on solid historical tradition and has never been shared by the Army.

In the first fourteen years of this century, for instance, when Germany was challenging our sea-power, the nation insisted, even in the teeth of a hesitating Parliamentary majority, on building ships at the rate of two to one against the expansion of the German Fleet; but it refused with equal stubbornness to be moved by its greatest and most popular soldier, Lord Roberts, when he pleaded for a national Army as no less essential than the Navy to British security.

We had at the time considerable reason for neglecting that appeal. No British Government had needed an army for centuries past except for one of two purposes—either to fight a foreign enemy abroad or else to impose

its will upon some recalcitrant section of its own people. The latter was a possibility which always made for suspicion against standing military forces. Cromwell's Major-Generals left behind them an evil memory; and when in the nineteenth century military aid was more than once invoked to repress the aspirations of the working-class, fuel was added in generous measure to the popular feeling that a standing Army was a standing menace to popular liberty.

The Navy could never be used as the instrument of a class or a party in our domestic controversies; the Army unfortunately could. The one Service was a guarantee of liberty; the other, a peril to it.

While, therefore, the Navy always kept its hold upon popular affection, the Army had to be re-created every year by the Army Annual Act, so that Parliament could abolish it at any time by simply refusing to sanction its legal existence. Peterloo has counted for more than Waterloo in our attitude towards it.

This national attitude towards standing military forces would, of course, have been impossible had the country been exposed to sudden invasion by a military neighbour. Lord Roberts tried to prove that a considerable raid upon us was possible, whatever the strength and vigilance of the Navy; but the predominant professional opinion of the day was against him, and our actual experience proved him to have been wrong in that one particular, though forces were retained in England right up to the Armistice for the purpose of resisting an unexpected German landing.

The lessons of the war may, no doubt, be differently

interpreted ; but in the mind of our people they confirmed its traditional attitude towards the Army.

Most of us concluded from it that if ever again we should have to undertake a military enterprise on that scale, there would be time enough to organize for it after the outbreak of war, when events had demonstrated its necessity. Most of us also determined never to be drawn again into mass warfare upon the Continent if we could possibly avoid it.

To have an Army ready-made for that purpose would only, we thought, deprive us of free judgment and make our embroilment certain. However small our first Expeditionary Force, the nation would inevitably follow in support of it when once it was committed to a European theatre.

It is said that when, in the days of Staff conversations before 1914, Sir Henry Wilson asked his French colleagues how much military assistance they would need in France or Flanders, Marshal Foch gave him an illuminating answer—"Send us one man only, and we will see that he is killed." The story may be apocryphal ; but whether so or not, it interprets the general feeling of this country that to send a single division is to commit the whole nation to mass warfare on the Continent.

Any Expeditionary Force, we opine, is in itself a veiled commitment. If once it is involved, the youth of the nation will be bound to follow it. Far better, then, to neglect the Army and keep an untrammelled discretion.

This has been the almost universal view even of ex-Service men. "Let us," they say, "keep out of war for France next time, if we can possibly manage it."

No one really believes that we fought for French security rather than our own ; but the results even of victory have been disillusioning, and if these views are strongly held by ex-Service men who knew the comradeship of arms, they are even more strongly held by fathers, mothers, wives and sisters whose part in the war was nothing but separation and suspense, and only too often bereavement.

To all this very natural feeling there was added in the years immediately following the war a passionate and always deepening belief in the efficacy of the League of Nations. Propaganda for the League was unremitting, and it fell on fruitful soil, since our instinctive desire for peace and the reign of law had been broadened and intensified by our war experience.

After the Napoleonic wars the propaganda of our great political idealists was largely concentrated on freedom. The liberation of slaves, Chartism, Parliamentary Reform and collective industrial action—these were the subjects that most profoundly moved our people.

The last war also greatly stimulated the demand for social progress and liberation ; but the most pervasive and the most untiring propaganda has been that of the League of Nations Union. Its effect upon the mind of the nation, already attuned to the faith and hope which it nurtured, has been tremendous. Old and young alike have responded to it passionately, and made it the very substance of their thought and feeling on international relations. This is our special "ideology," and it has fastened still more firmly upon us the general idea that anything savouring of conscription means not only a menace to freedom but war.

It is clear, therefore, that the "difficulties and opposition" mentioned by the Prime Minister arise from a formidable compound of history, tradition, habit, experience and prejudice, and that they will not be removed until the great majority of us have grasped the full significance of two incontrovertible facts—namely, that our age-long security against sudden invasion has been shattered by the advent of air power, and that readiness to meet air attack is necessary, before all else, for the prevention of war.

I have no doubt whatever that when once the average citizen has taken those facts to heart and weighed them against our older order of ideas, judgment will go for dealing with the facts, however inconvenient. But the case has to be made, and we cannot afford a two or three years' delay in making it—such as postponed so dangerously the beginning of our rearmament.

Think of it! If we had at least begun to renew and complete our minimum of equipment without that fatal delay, Italy would not have snapped her fingers at the League and us, Germany would not have reoccupied and fortified the Rhineland without such reasonable conditions as we would have sought to impose, Austria would not have been absorbed, and the whole European situation would be different. Truly we pay a heavy price for our ancient habit of refusing to observe that it is raining until we are wet to the skin.

We cannot, I say and say again, afford to indulge that habit any more. The Sybil's book of leaves is thinning, and the price of further indifference to her ways will be a far more searching dilemma between humiliation and war.

Registration and A.R.P.

Waiving then, for the moment our strong dislike of change in the settled course of our ideas, let us look at the immediate uses for which a Register of Citizens is required. It is only by so doing with unprejudiced minds that we can decide how far they will really affect our freedom and our careless ways of life.

To begin with, let us assume that all the men and women whose normal occupation in peace would be equally essential in war have been marked off upon the Register, and that after this deduction (which must be very considerable) there remains in every division or centre a certain number of people of suitable age for special war service in all its forms. What are the most important war duties that they would be called upon to perform? I suggest the following :—

1. The Territorial anti-aircraft formations should be fully manned and ready for immediate action in local detachments at all vital centres—*ready*, that is, *on the spot*.

2. The A.R.P. Services should also be fully manned and prepared, preference in training under the still limited staff being given to those centres of population which are, because of their military importance, most likely to be attacked.

3. The rest of the Territorial Army should be brought up to full strength.

4. The Regular Army should be furnished with a Special Reserve of officers and other ranks.

It must be perfectly clear, in the first place, that none of these services can count with certainty on all its personnel unless they are marked off as available upon a Register. Failing that classification, there will be persons in all of them who will not be available when the emergency arises because their first duty is elsewhere. The compilation of a Register will at least prevent confusion and inefficiency on that account. Need it be used for more?

So far as the civilian A.R.P. Services are concerned, it would seem that everything must depend upon the voluntary response. But that must be adequate, and it must also be classified. I know personally of men living in the country five miles away from a country-town being asked to volunteer for the town's emergency fire-brigade because the response on the spot was inadequate. An emergency fire-brigade with members living and sleeping at five miles' distance from their work is not likely to come into action promptly should an emergency occur. Yet that is only one of the manifest and multitudinous inefficiencies which cannot be guarded against without a proper Register.

Volunteers for the A.R.P. services must obviously live and sleep in the centre where their work is to be done. Otherwise the organization for resistance to air attack will be a costly sham which will break down hopelessly in the first days of hostilities, when it will be needed most.

Whether these difficulties can be surmounted without some measure of compulsion depends entirely on ourselves. I do not believe that compulsion would be needed in any important centre when once the real

necessity of organization had been brought home to its inhabitants. But we are still very far from a universal understanding of the widespread personal service which security demands, and some action such as that here proposed on the basis of a Register is really necessary in order that our people may realize at last that the Government is in earnest in its local appeals for adequate A.R.P. staff.

There is, moreover, another most important consideration to be taken into account. We are not organizing A.R.P. services for a special emergency that will soon be past. Organization of the vital centres of the country against air attack will be necessary for many years to come, even if our efforts succeed—as Heaven send they will—in producing a limitation of air armaments. We cannot afford to be defenceless against air invasion, any more than against sea invasion, until an effective counter has been discovered and the bombing aeroplane in consequence has ceased to count.

I firmly believe that in due course such a discovery will be made. When it is made and proved, we shall be an island again, and the Navy will be, as for centuries past, a sufficient shield against sudden attack. But till it is made, the A.R.P. services must be maintained at a sufficient standard of efficiency to command the respect of any Air Power within striking distance of our shores.

We must therefore organize for continuity as well as for immediate effect. Volunteers will be needed year after year as other volunteers change their habitation or drop out, and we cannot have a war scare with a nation-wide campaign every succeeding year to bring the necessary volunteers up to the scratch.

For that purpose the following further measures appear to be indispensable :—

1. The Register of Citizens, like the Parliamentary Register, should be thoroughly revised every year so that it be always reasonably up to date.

2. There should be some legal compulsion on local authorities to keep their A.R.P. services up to the necessary standard of efficiency and strength.

3. There should be some system of national inspection sufficient to ensure that no local authority neglects this task.

4. A special controlling and co-ordinating authority should be established for Greater London, munition centres and ports.

It is hardly necessary to point out that these measures involve no interference with any person's liberty; their purpose is to make voluntary service effective, as it will need to be. If men and women have the privilege of voting, they should be willing to give some minimum of service in defence of all that goes with the vote.

I have very great difficulty in believing that the A.R.P. services cannot be organized efficiently in this way without any measure of compulsion, provided that the Government organization for training is equal to the voluntary response. For the time being thousands of volunteers have been disheartened because no practical response has been made to their offer to enlist. That is, no doubt, a passing phase;

but the sooner it passes, the more certain we may be of adequate voluntary response.

The immediate military use to which the Register would be put raises different considerations and deserves a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER VIII

OUR MILITARY PROBLEMS

THE Territorial Anti-Aircraft divisions are carrying a load of responsibility which entitles them to all our consideration and care. The first point is to see that they are supplied with all the necessary equipment—guns, searchlights and instruments—with a minimum of delay. Labour has a great responsibility in this respect.

Secondly, they must be organized on a territorial or even local basis in such a way that the units are ready always for instant action *on the spot*. It will not do to have a cumbrous organization under which the crews of guns and searchlights in vital centres can only be collected after hours or even days of delay.

In the third place, they must not contain any men who will be wanted elsewhere if war breaks out. Engineers and mechanics may offer the best possible material for these units, but they should be rigorously excluded from them if they are at all likely to be needed in their own industries for essential war production of any sort.

In the fourth place, we must accept the fact that, like the A.R.P. services, the A.A. units are not being recruited and trained for a special and passing emergency. They will have to form an effective part of our standing defences for many years to come. We cannot have spectacular recruiting campaigns all over Britain

every year; they would make us ridiculous and the effect of them would steadily grow less.

Measures must therefore be taken to ensure, not only that the units are now brought up to strength, but that the inevitable annual wastage is steadily repaired without resort to humiliating advertisement and the perpetuation of war scares. It is not fair to expect all those who join now to continue serving indefinitely; the younger generation as it reaches manhood must take its share of the task.

Fifthly and finally, there is no question that when equipment is available the strength of the anti-aircraft units must be increased, and also that they must have their own reserve against casualties, sickness and other forms of wastage. The Regular Army may not always be available for home defence, and it should be freed from any responsibility which may conflict with its duties as an imperial reserve for oversea emergencies.

When all these considerations are weighed, it will be seen that the proper functioning of our Territorial Anti-Aircraft system of defence is part of the much wider Army problem which is now confronting us. Let us therefore pass on to that. How is our Army at the present time and what are its needs?

The Army Problem

Vigorous though it be, the progress of rearmament has not as yet done much to clear our views upon the Army or to increase its efficiency. Not that the spirit of the Army itself is anything but admirable. Not

very long ago a famous German soldier was looking by invitation round one of our Royal Air Force aerodromes, and entered a machine on a visit of inspection. The pilot, one of our youngest, did the honours, and then, as his visitor was leaving, burst out irrepressibly—"I say, sir, are your fellows really as keen as ours?" The great soldier came out amused and impressed by the revealing interrogation, which was typical of the spirit of all three Services.

But while that spirit is as keen as any could desire in the Army itself, the difficulties of Army recruiting inevitably suggest to other nations that it is not reflected in the rest of the nation. For that, as for other reasons, the Army problem is now of major importance to the maintenance of peace.

The authorized strength of the Regular Army to-day is 10,000 fewer than it was in 1925, and about two-thirds of its strength in 1914. Even so, it is about 1,000 officers and over 20,000 other ranks below establishment. This situation is a dangerous one. Not only is it taken by military nations as a sign of decadence in our race; it also condemns us to a humiliating lack of power in certain areas from Gibraltar to Hong-Kong, where we have never hitherto been weak.

The reasons are not what the military nations suppose. Chief amongst them is the fact that we have had no clear and definite military doctrine since the end of the war, and that the nation has consequently come to regard the Army as an obsolete instrument with dangerous potentialities which had better be mislaid. Hardly one man in a hundred thousand understands that without an Army fit for Imperial service oversea the Navy and

the Royal Air Force must lose their bases and be reduced to impotence. Those, moreover, who work most consistently against the Army's welfare are those whose Mediterranean policy most needs military strength.

All this is in close accord with precedent. Any chapter of Fortescue will testify to that. As soon as a war is over crabbed suspicion is our Army's habitual fate. Public satisfaction with the treatment recently meted out to many of its best officers is well in keeping with that ignoble tradition, but dismissals and promotions do not touch the real cause of our military defects. The troubles of the Army are not of its own making; they are political, and need an organizer like Haldane, with political as well as military sense to put them right. Lord Haldane gave us an admirably efficient reorganization without upheavals or increase of cost within six months of his appointment as Secretary of State.

The problem, so far as the Regular Army is concerned, is in the main a technical problem demanding brainwork of the searching Haldane type. There must be a doctrine as clear as his, which the country understands and approves, and terms of service based on it which will make regular soldiering more attractive than it has been for many years past. If, moreover, we are to recruit young men of spirit and capacity for all ranks, we must refrain from treating their Service with suspicion and contempt. The Regular Army simply must be made equal in Colour strength and Reserves to its Imperial and oceanic duties, so that it can be dispatched and maintained oversea in any distant emergency without deplet-

ing the Territorial Army, whose proper task is home defence. Like the Navy and the Air Force, it must be a professional Service complete as such.

Sound as it was in nearly all particulars, the Haldane reorganization suffered from one serious defect, which still befogs our military thinking.

The strength of the Haldane Expeditionary Force was not fixed by study of the part it would be called upon to play in a European war; it was simply a by-product of the Cardwell system under which every unit serving oversea is roughly balanced by a similar unit at home. That home establishment was used by Lord Haldane for a double purpose. It was, on the one hand, the training organization necessary to maintain or replace our garrisons oversea and to reinforce them should an emergency arise. It was, on the other, our military contribution to the defence of the Low Countries and the Channel ports.

Two widely different purposes were, in fact, served by one and the same force. In the circumstances of the time that duality of purpose involved no excessive risk, because our foreign policy had given us so large a measure of security in the East that we were able, when war broke out in Europe, to concentrate the greater part of the Regular Army in one theatre without inconvenience.

To-day our situation, from the Mediterranean to the Yellow Sea, is entirely different. We must therefore have, in the first place, a Regular Army and Reserve equal to our extra-European liabilities, and that Army must not be simultaneously mortgaged to cover our liabilities in a European war or in home defence.

At present we have nothing of the kind. Not only is the Regular Army under strength; it is backed by a much depleted and wholly inadequate Army Reserve. India, moreover, is changing fast, and the conditions of service there are one of the main reasons why recruiting has been so difficult. The Foot Guards do not go to India, and they have never lacked recruits, though they demand a much higher physical standard than the Line.

The Cardwell system is therefore creaking under an increasing strain. Many people have suggested its abandonment, but experts with full knowledge continue to hesitate. While, however, further changes in India may complicate the problem, there is really no doubt about the character of the measures now required.

The first is a clear decision as to the Army strength which must be maintained for garrison duty oversea, for reinforcement of those garrisons, and, finally, for reserve against all oversea liabilities other than European war. Whatever that strength may be, measures must be taken to recruit and maintain it without further delay. Despite some slight improvement, that has not yet been done, and it is very unlikely to be done unless the present terms of service are drastically amended. A part of the Regular Army must always be recruited for a long or at least a medium term of years, and those who enter it for such service must be assured of a career. Till that is done we shall neither have, nor deserve to have, the Regular Army which our Imperial liabilities necessitate.

But that is only half the problem to be solved, for no improvement in the terms of long or medium service can now suffice alone to produce the strength required.

Long years of bad recruiting and various expedients used to bridge the gaps which it has caused have reduced the Army Reserve to a state of weakness which calls imperatively for cure. Some system of short-service recruiting seems therefore indispensable, if only as a temporary measure, till the Army Reserve is restored.

When all this has been done we shall be free, if we desire it, to consider the further strength required for military participation in a European war; but that is a separate, secondary and entirely different question which must be kept clear of our primary and indispensable military needs.

The restoration of an adequate Army Reserve is as important to the welfare of the Territorial Army as to that of the Regular Army, for it is common knowledge that if the Regular Army now took the field, it would in that process absorb the greater part of its own Reserve and would have thereafter to depend on drafts from Territorial units to keep it up to strength.

This would be clean against the undertaking given to the Territorial Army that its units shall preserve their identity, whether they serve at home or overseas, and shall not be broken up as drafts to Regular regiments in the field; and it is bad both for Territorial recruiting and for Territorial *esprit de corps*. Having its own character and its own most legitimate pride, the Territorial Army should not be overshadowed by the prospect of decimation into promiscuous drafts because those responsible for the Regular Army have neglected the upkeep of its distinctive Reserve. It must know that its terms of service will be scrupulously honoured if it is to thrive.

Thrive it must, for it has a vital part to play in making us proof against air attack and also against the trouble in many forms which is certain to accompany it. It should, moreover, constitute a veritable Second Line, available against all contingencies in its own formations and units—a function which it can never adequately perform so long as it remains, in fact if not in theory, a draft-finding reserve for the First Line. In that character of Second Line it should be raised to a higher establishment, with its own Reserve, so that the Regular Army—also with its own Reserve—is free for the Imperial and oceanic duties which constitute its primary and indispensable role. What both need is a clear division of function.

Since his statement on the Army Estimates we know that Mr. Hore-Belisha, the Secretary of State for War, is grappling courageously with these problems.

He is making trial of new terms of service in the Regular Army, and he has been authorized by the Prime Minister to discuss our Indian army system with the India Office. He is making marked improvements in the living conditions of soldiers, and he is striving to re-equip the Service as quickly as possible. He has also greatly raised the status of the Territorial Army, and has been happily successful in stimulating entry into the special anti-aircraft units.

All this is much to the good, and we may be grateful to him for the vigour and freshness of mind with which he is tackling the whole Army problem.

But it is misleading to suppose that we are yet within sight of a solution of it. Recruiting has been improved by two special provisions. The physical

standard has been very considerably modified, and a special establishment has been created at Canterbury for the purpose of bringing up to standard would-be recruits whose unfitness is manifestly due to special causes such as inadequate feeding and other remediable deficiencies. The results of this innovation have been remarkable.

Strenuous and imaginative efforts are also being made to popularize the Army as a career, and to broadcast the many real attractions of the Service. This campaign has, as I have already explained, to reckon with a deep and ancient well of national prejudice; but its success is essential to our security, and everyone should endeavour to assist it.

The Army now offers splendid openings for young men of spirit and intelligence, and it ought not to be less attractive than the Navy, which has never failed to secure all, and more than all, the candidates for entrance required at any particular moment. The Air Force shares that happy situation with the Navy, and there is no ostensible reason, except ancient and inveterate tradition, why the Army should be less fortunate.

The Question to be Faced

Will it be enough to work and hope for that result, or are we to be compelled to choose, in the near future, between compulsory military service and a state of insecurity which endangers all we stand for in human civilization at the present time?

Many people are suspicious of a National Register because they see these questions looming behind it, and not so far away. Are their suspicions justified?

One thing at least is certain—that if we are forced to fight another war, universal liability to military service will be enacted by any Government at once. When once War breaks out, it will be totalitarian war for all who take part in it.

Those who unleash the dogs of war may intend no more than to give them a short trial and see what can be made of it. But when once they are unleashed, who can tell how long and how far they will run? War between great nations tends always to become a war *à outrance*, as the last war did; and there is little hope that we should emerge from it again without having thrown into the scales the whole of our strength and youth.

So terrible is that prospect that it would be little short of suicidal folly to shrink from any measure which may keep it at arm's length. If the ordeal is forced upon us, I have no fear of the ultimate result—provided we are able to keep our manufacturing power and the mechanism of our island life in proper working order during the first few critical weeks. But even given that condition, which is absolutely vital, what would victory not cost us in suffering and sacrifice?

Our birthrate and our prospects of increase have fallen seriously since the last great war, and we are already faced with a change in the proportion of youth to age which must make it harder to maintain our economic progress and continue raising our standards of life. There will be fewer of the able-bodied to work and

produce by comparison with the old and infirm who look to the State for support.

Quite apart, therefore, from the awful tragedy of war itself, the suffering and the sacrifice, even victory must leave us enfeebled for the task of rebuilding our civilization in peace. We simply cannot afford—no European nation except Russia can afford—the appalling loss and waste.

The conclusion is surely inescapable that we must not leave to improvisation in war-time anything which we can do here and now to keep war from our gates. We have to convince those who may not shrink from war that their chances of success are not worth the stake. That is the only way of putting an end to the diplomacy of pressure and shock, the only way, also, of securing an agreement to the limitation of armaments.

There are thus really two separate aspects of our military problem which will have to be taken in turn. The one is how to meet our immediate emergency, for that needs measures which will take immediate effect. The other is the long-range question of providing for our military necessities over future years without war scares and at reasonable cost. Beating the war drum at frequent intervals is a bad business which we ought to drop for ever when once our immediate requirements are met.

The most pressing of those requirements I have already laid down. They are the completion to full strength of the Territorial Anti-Aircraft units with personnel not needed for war duty in other forms and available for immediate action in the place where it resides; the recruiting of the rest of the Territorial

Army up to full establishment ; and lastly the creation of a National Reserve for the Regular Army from officers and other ranks who served in the last war.

The Territorial Anti-Aircraft units come first in order of importance, and we cannot, as I have tried to show, over-estimate the urgency of the need for ensuring their efficiency. But the rest of the Territorial Army has also most important duties to perform. Home defence is the proper function of the Second Line, and it should be able to provide all the strength required for it, so that the Regular Army (which is none too strong for its overseas responsibilities without home duties of any kind) is free to serve without question as a genuine Imperial reserve.

The Regular Army is at present detailed for a considerable share in the duties of home defence. That is one of its first responsibilities, if the Secretary of State is to be believed. But it is always to be remembered that the Regular Army may be called upon at any time to reinforce our position in the East or Middle East, and it is just such a moment that an unprincipled European aggressor would choose for trying conclusions with us. Our Second Line should therefore be well up to establishment.

Furthermore, while foreigners may be able to understand the difficulties of recruiting for a Regular Army which calls upon its soldiers for long years of service in the East, they will never attribute to anything but lack of patriotism a continued shortage in a Second Line which calls for very limited service and exists only for home defence.

Every true democracy in Europe maintains a universal

liability to service for home defence, and trains annually for that purpose such proportion of its young manhood as the Government thinks fit. In nearly all cases the service is longer and more exacting than Territorial service here.

We have our own traditions and principles, but we need very sorely to justify them by showing that they are not a mere cover for lack of public spirit and slackness of thought. We may be satisfied ourselves that any such interpretation of our recruiting difficulties is absurd and unjust; but we cannot afford to ignore the impression which they make on other nations, whether they be democracies or dictatorships, for such an impression, even though false, may seriously affect their attitude and weaken the foundations of peace.

We must therefore make a success of Territorial recruiting both on moral and material grounds, and the success must be achieved by an appeal for voluntary enlistment to all men free for the purpose in the centres where the troops are required. I cannot help thinking that more could be done by giving local names to the units required and calling on local patriotism in each case to bring its own unit up to strength. Local anti-aircraft artillery and searchlights could certainly be greatly strengthened by that means, when the equipment can be supplied; and it might be applied with effect to the units which will be needed for other local duties. The Army is accustomed to organization of a broader kind—divisions, brigades and battalions available for service where required; but much of the Territorial duty is purely local in character, and readiness to undertake it could, I think, be stimulated by an appeal to local pride in its own district or town.

Compulsion, in any case, cannot be fairly applied when the need is for men of all ages within broad limits who are free and fit for military service of any kind; but it would doubtless assist recruiting if it were known that after a period of emergency organization a steady and continuous draft from annual classes would be relieving the serving Territorial soldier and enabling him to leave the Army altogether or else pass into the Reserve.

The Territorial Army must also be assured that it will not be called upon for drafts to the Regular Army, and for that reason it seems to me desirable that a National Reserve of old officers and other ranks should be established for reinforcement of the Regular Army in case of need. The Regular Army is at present short by 1,000 of its proper complement of officers and more than 20,000 short of its complement of men. The Army Reserve is also much below its proper strength. There are in this country hundreds of ex-officers with valuable training and war experience; there are still thousands of able-bodied ex-N.C.O.'s and men who have not forgotten the elements of soldiering and would be good for duty of some sort in an emergency.

There is no record whatever at the War Office of this invaluable reserve of officers and other ranks. I believe that thousands would enrol themselves and give particulars of their service if called upon, and the Register of Citizens should provide for that.

Having such a record in its hands, the War Office could create a National Reserve such as Lord Haldane never dreamt of, though he had a National Reserve of

something like 150,000 which proved of sterling use ; and it could organize it in two or three classes—Staff or regimental service, foreign or home, active and fit or veteran and light duty—according to its needs.

If it then called for volunteers from those who had enrolled, it could, I believe, count on a heartening response. Officers and other ranks could choose the category of reserve for which they felt themselves fit, and the War Office could leave it at that. Medical examinations would not be desirable until the emergency arose, and even then only for those who had volunteered for active service. Everyone who went through the last war knows that the most stout-hearted and efficient were by no means always the most fit.

It is true that the foregoing measures would not permanently solve our military problem. They would, of necessity, be the product of a special emergency appeal, and their effect would be short-lived if nothing of a more permanent character were built up behind them. But if they were carried out at once with spirit and despatch, they would, I believe, produce a deep impression on Europe, and strengthen the forces that make for moderation and agreement in international affairs.

For they would, in the first place, greatly improve our moral standing—and the importance of the moral factor in situations like the present can hardly be over-emphasized. But that is by no means all. They would show, in addition, that air attack upon us would meet with instant and effective resistance from the first moment of war, and that any further measures required of us for victory would mature with a much greater rapidity

than was possible in 1914-15 because the keel of national organization would be waiting ready laid.

Both these material considerations would strongly reinforce the moral effect of the cautionary and preparatory measures here proposed, and the three in combination would do much more than any possible extension of our professional Services to discourage military pressure upon us, to say nothing of military aggression if pressure failed.

For the rest, I frankly do not believe that compulsion of adults of all ages is either reasonable or necessary to prove the spirit, increase the authority and ensure the safety of this country at the present time. If we are driven to it, it will only be because we have neglected other much less exacting precautions and exposed ourselves to war.

But even these precautionary measures will not, so far as I can see, be efficiently carried out on a voluntary basis unless a Register of Citizens is first established to sort our population out. Promiscuous volunteering presents almost as many difficulties in peace as in war; and the keener the volunteering, the greater the difficulties unless some preliminary classification has been made. Our training facilities are in any case none too large, and we should not waste them on training people who cannot be counted upon for immediate service should the emergency arise.

We must therefore have a Register of Citizens if the voluntary spirit is to be given a real opportunity of providing us with the preliminary framework of trained and organized defence which the country requires. Let but that step be taken, and it may transform our

present showing in European eyes. Professional Fighting Services with ships, guns, aeroplanes and all the panoply of modern war are, of course, indispensable and count a great deal. But in the present state of Europe they cannot count one half as much as a demonstration which none can mistake that the country behind them is organized and prepared.

The importance of that consideration could be illustrated from many foreign cartoons. I remember a German one which may serve as the type of a very wide range of comment directed to our address. It showed "British Rearmament" in two pictures printed side by side. The one was of a knight at arms, resplendent from plume to spurs in the panoply of war. The other was a back view of the knight. The armour so imposing from the front did not join behind, and it was tied by leather straps which revealed a complete emptiness within.

That is the picture which we present to European nations long indoctrinated to national readiness for war—a frontage of fine professional Fighting Services, splendid in their armament, but without the spirit and substance of an organized nation behind; and to that widespread impression a Register of Citizens for Home Defence may, I believe, be a sufficient answer without "conscription" in advance of war.

But the Register is indispensable to enable the voluntary spirit to be used to full effect without denuding the professions and industry of the personnel which they require and also without risking double entries into services which cannot be combined with each other when both come simultaneously into play.

When once the Register is compiled, it will lie with all those who are free to volunteer to prove that compulsion need not be applied. If we wish our voice to be heard with respect in Europe and to make an end of the weaknesses displayed by democracy in recent years, that is the way to do it. The Register need not lead to compulsion, if our people will realize in time that this minimum of organization and voluntary effort is imperative for their own security and to give them that decisive influence for peace which they alone can exercise.

We can do this with free service if only we will face the need for registration and classification as the framework of defence on voluntary lines. It would be a splendid demonstration of national spirit to make our system of home defence clearly and unmistakably complete, without compulsion, by that means.

CHAPTER IX

THE FOUR INDISPENSABLES

WHATEVER our party affiliations, strong or weak or none, whatever our view on foreign policy, whatever our political philosophies (short of genuine pacifism, which few of us are prepared to practise), our interest and our duty are the same on this central issue of national security.

To make freedom safe in our time there are four indispensable necessities. Nothing is yet lost if we face them immediately ; all will be lost within measureable time if we fail to do so.

I

AN END TO ILLUSION

First and foremost, we can no longer afford to foster a debilitating twin brotherhood of illusions. One of this Siamese fraternity is the idea that preparedness in Britain will make for war, and that though we cannot dispense with all force, the less of it the better. The other is the belief that we may find in foreign policy *per se* a substitute for national organization and rearmament.

Two perilous hallucinations. Consider them.

Mr. Gandhi's Advice

Mr. Gandhi, the greatest living apostle of non-violence, has had much to say of those who wish to

compromise between absolute pacifism and thoroughgoing reliance on force. Pacifism is one thing, mere anti-militarism another. It is sheer futility to accept, as most of us do, the fact that force is essential to the protection of life, possessions, liberty and justice in the world of our time, and then to recoil from any step which is necessary to make that force effective for the purpose.

Such at any rate are Mr. Gandhi's reflexions on the matter as recorded by Lord Lothian, who recently spent some days in private discussion with him. How, Lord Lothian asked, is the doctrine of non-violence to be applied "in international affairs, and especially in a world where war is totalitarian, where combatants are no longer in contact with one another, but organize air massacre from afar, and where the wells of publicity are closed by Government controls?"

This is his account of Mr. Gandhi's reply:—

"Mr. Gandhi, following the 'Gita,' is no 'escapist' from the struggles of this world. Nor does he preach non-resistance to evil. He preaches resistance, but by non-violent means.

"But, as he has often declared, non-violent resistance is far more difficult and far more heroic, even though where it is properly applied it may also be far more effective, than violent resistance to aggression. If, he has said, the Abyssinians had refrained, on principle, from resisting the Italian invasion by violence, but had, to the last man, woman and child refused to do any work or sell any food or render any service, and had been willing to endure stripes,

and jail, and machine-gunning, and any other form of violence rather than co-operate with the Italians in their invasion, but throughout loving and not hating their oppressors, their resistance would have been effective, and Abyssinia itself would, by now, be purified, ennobled, and free.

“That policy argues a degree both of heroism and discipline which no nation yet possesses, and nobody is stronger than the Mahatma in insisting that to be a pacifist because you are afraid of the loss and suffering involved in resistance is utterly fatal, and that if you are not ready for non-violent resistance it is better to resist wrong by violence than not to resist it at all.”¹

None, therefore, who believes that in the present state of the world force only yields to force should refrain from making the power of his own country as great as that of any other country which may challenge its faith or its security. Pacifism is in itself an absolute and exclusive ideal; and if you abandon yourself to it, you must for the time abandon all other ideals, such as liberty, justice and even peace. If, on the other hand, you are not prepared to dispense with force altogether, you must have enough of it at your command and be able both to use and to resist it effectively.

Policy Without Force

Policy alone offers no escape from that indispensable necessity. A forward policy in Europe to-day can lead

¹ From *The Observer* of April 24th, 1938.

to nothing but war or humiliation if it be not backed by formidable military strength. There will always be a moment of crisis when our Government, whatever its political complexion, must look to our power of resistance against the knock-out blow before it takes a line which leaves no opening between risk of war and diplomatic defeat.

Other nations, we know, are prepared to take that risk. Germany has already taken it four times ; Italy, twice. We cannot speak on equal terms with such Powers unless, in the last extreme, we are prepared and organized to take it with equal resolution. That is essential even to the policy of conciliation which the Prime Minister is pursuing, and much more so to the Opposition policy of uncompromising resistance to dictatorships.

Take, for instance, the new Anglo-Italian agreement. There is no question that the renewal of our old friendship with Italy may prove a definite step towards European peace. It is not the details of the agreement that count, but the genuine desire for co-operation on both sides of which it is the mark. The agreement on which we based our Entente with France in the first years of this century contained no undertakings such as critics have demanded in this Anglo-Italian Entente, but it altered the history of Europe none the less ; and the Anglo-Italian agreement of this year may do no less. It may, if we are strong. It will never do so, if we are weak.

In 1914 Italy was bound to Germany and Austria-Hungary by the Triple Alliance, but that instrument contained a proviso exempting her from the obligation

of going to war against Britain. Despite the Alliance, therefore, our traditional friendship with Italy stood us in good stead. She was neutral when hostility on her part would have compelled some dispersion of the French armies and facilitated the onrush of Germany from the north-east; and she came to our side in the war when persuaded that she could take the risk. Our strength was, in fact, the governing consideration.

Italy is a more formidable Power to-day, but with Germany directly at her gates on the Brenner Pass she faces a risk greater than that of 1914-15, when the Dual Monarchy was her immediate neighbour. It was inevitable that she should come to terms with Germany when her adventure in Abyssinia had estranged her from her old allies, Great Britain and France. But the two authoritarian States have little enough in common, even to the type of their dictatorships, and Italy would inevitably become the subservient member of the partnership if German policy destroyed the European balance and achieved the supremacy which it covets. Italy must, therefore, favour the maintenance of that balance, and she will assuredly co-operate in maintaining it if its other supporters are strong enough to command respect.

It is accordingly no cynical disparagement of Italy or of her desire to co-operate with us to say that the extent to which she actually does so will depend on our military strength. On that consideration will turn the ultimate value of the agreement—that and nothing else. The mere fact of agreement is a step in the right direction. It is better, in the balance of imponderables, that now as in 1914 Italy should not be absolutely and finally

bound to diplomatic and military collaboration with her neighbour to the north, and that the sentiment of her warm-hearted people should be once again most definitely with us. But sentiment will not count, unless she also respects our military efficiency.

The same argument applies to the policy of conciliation with Germany herself. That is infinitely desirable, since on it will turn all possibility of a limitation of the present competition in armaments and therefore the ultimate security for peace. Germany is already the greatest military Power in Europe, and she will use her strength for all that it is worth. Small blame to her after the years of humiliating subservience through which she has passed.

We cannot hope to rival her in all-round military strength. We are a nation of 45 millions, and she is one of 75 ; that difference cannot be conjured away by diplomatic sleight of hand, and it is bound to count. But the rapid accretion of prosperity and power on which she can certainly rely need not be dangerous to us or to our ideals of right in international relationships if we behave with reason to her and also show that there is a point beyond which we cannot be safely pressed.

In her case, more than any other, the diplomacy of conciliation will be futile unless our organization for war and our national morale command her genuine respect. They barely do so at the present moment, and that apparent weakness must, in the interests of peace, be expeditiously corrected.

Not that we need aspire to equal her in military strength. She has not as yet renewed her challenge to

our mastery of the seas between us, and we have no need to attempt to rival her military organization, even if our numbers permitted it. But we must at all costs reduce the disparity between her air power and ours; and we must also show that no concentration of that power upon our factories, cities and ports can be launched with reasonable hope of success. That is the *sine qua non* of friendship with Germany, which the majority of us greatly desire to keep.

But if that maxim applies with force to the Government's policy of conciliation, how much more forcibly must it apply to the Opposition policy of defiance and distrust! Socialists seem to be convinced that no accommodation is possible between democracies and dictatorships which does not sacrifice the future of the working-class. They are waging a powerful campaign on those lines against the Government, and they will no doubt strive their utmost to win a majority for their policy when next the Government appeals to the electorate.

An election must take place in 1940, if not in 1939 or even 1938; and if they look forward—as they no doubt sincerely do—to putting their policy into effect, they are surely bound by all the laws of reason to co-operate in giving this country power to rally other democracies by strength made manifest. If they persist in turning their backs upon our present weakness till they themselves can carry out a policy which satisfies their minds and hearts, that policy will break in their hands the moment it is put to the test.

II

SEA COMMAND AND AIR PARITY

The liberties of Britain have been built up generation by generation in peculiarly favourable conditions. because we have lived in an island sanctuary which none could invade so long as we maintained a sufficient command of the sea. For that age-long immunity two conditions have always been essential—first, that our Navy should be powerful enough to preclude invasion by sea ; and second, that we should prevent any European Power from so dominating the continent as to outrange our resources and wrest the trident from our grasp.

We have, in fact, never been strong enough to stand alone in times of crisis, and have therefore always made common cause with other European nations against the dominance of any single Power.

The Recurring Challenge.

That is the story of our struggle with Spain, with the France of the Grand Monarch, with the France of Napoleon, and finally with the Germany of William the Second. The Power which strove for supremacy in Europe has always found that it must settle accounts with us because we held the maritime avenues of trade and supply. No nation could establish an effective hegemony of Europe so long as Britain ruled the sea, because in doing so she controlled to a very great extent the sinews necessary to continental aggrandizement.

Our need for sea-power has therefore ranged us automatically with the challenged against the challenger in all the bids for European supremacy which history records, and we have more than once saved the liberties of Europe in the process of protecting our own.

There has always been some such challenge for at least four centuries past. There is to-day. The phenomenon recurs again and again, and is likely to go on recurring till Europe organizes its civilization on the federal principle. The situation by which we are confronted is therefore no new one. A great nation is being once again indoctrinated with the ambition to make its own special type of civilization supreme, and our independence must ultimately be challenged by that ambition, if it achieves so great a combination of resources that it can dominate our island with superior military power.

Once again we are not strong enough alone to moderate that process of aggrandizement. We are, therefore, as always, making sure of friends whose interests coincide with ours; and we do that without hostility to Germany so long as her expansion does not threaten to impair the essential conditions of our independence in our island sanctuary. The tightening of our understanding with France and the mending of our old friendship with Italy are but the most recent examples of a classic line of policy which every British Government is bound in emergency to pursue; and it has no point against Germany so long as German policy contains no menace to us.

Nor is there any secret as to the manner in which Germany might become a menace to us. We are bound

to resist any direct aggression against France, and we should also be bound to resist the creation of a *bloc* in Central and South-Eastern Europe which destroyed the liberties of other nations with a culture of their own. It would be fatal to our liberty that any Power should achieve a position even in Central Europe which enabled it to dictate to other European Powers.

Germany can make herself the political and economic centre of a group of peoples without danger to European peace, provided the liberty of the smaller members is not destroyed. But if she sets forth to suppress their individuality, destroy their religion and make them subservient pieces in a vast fabric of military power, she is bound to raise against herself the resistance of other members of the European family, including ourselves. To unite all her own people, to find outlets for their organizing talent, markets for their industry, and sources whence they may supply their own needs—these are aims which none can legitimately dispute, and they will assure a great future to the German race. But the Nazification of her neighbours is another matter, different only in method from the Communism which she abhors, and it would lead inevitably to a conflict in which Communism alone would gain its ends.

The New and Dominating Fact.

There is, I repeat, nothing new in this situation; but there is something new in the military problem which it presents to us. Safe from invasion behind our moat of sea, we have always been able in the past to

improvise after war was actually upon us the military measures for which the situation appeared to call. No one could invade our soil, and we could therefore gather our great resources with deliberation and conduct the war abroad on such lines as we thought desirable.

The last war was a signal example of the advantage which our island position thus conferred on us. From the first moment of it France was fighting on her own soil for our defence as well as her own. We sent her what we had—a splendid force but very small—and then proceeded quietly to improvise the great expansion of military strength which was manifestly necessary. The first Kitchener divisions did not fight at the front till September, 1915,—more than a year after the declaration of war. They did not really begin to count until the following year. It was, Heaven knows, of awful cost to us that we were not prepared for European war when the struggle began; but our allies were able with small assistance from us to hold the essential front for many months while we trained and organized to play our proper part on it.

With the invention of air power that tremendous advantage has gone, and we must now be ready and organized for instant resistance to air attack if we are to survive. Neither the Navy nor Allies nor any system of collective security can alter that vital fact. Our homes, our ports, our factories, everything indeed that constitutes our life and strength, is open to instant and continuous air bombardment from the moment war begins, whether declared or not.

We are, moreover, more vulnerable to air attack than any other nation in the world, except possibly

Japan. Our vast capital is spread in all its weakness across that corner of the island which lies nearest to the continent. Our main factory areas, with their crowded population, are hardly less exposed. The ports through which we draw our essential food and fuel supplies are all within easy bombing distance for modern aeroplanes.

Our island security is therefore for the time being lost. It is we, in our own sanctuary, who would suffer the first and worst of the strain in the first stage of war. We and our allies would, of course, bomb the enemy country in return ; but we could be made to endure far more suffering and damage than we wrought, and we should be faced by an enemy whose use of his military machine was entirely unaffected by popular considerations such as mitigating the suffering of his own people.

His main military objective would of necessity be the annihilation of Britain as a fighting power by massive and continuous air attack, since he would know that failure in that object would lead to his ultimate defeat by the naval blockade, whatever temporary successes he achieved elsewhere. Every resource he could muster would therefore be concentrated against us. That is a military certainty which no allies could affect. Neither air fighting nor counter-bombing would prevent a tremendous, ruthless and unprecedented effort to knock this country out.

A Peril without Precedent.

Neither Napoleon's France nor William the Second's Germany ever had such a fighting chance ; and no

effort of organization should be too exacting for us, if it enables us to prevent their modern successor in the struggle for supremacy over Europe from trying it.

To prevent it we must at all costs demonstrate, here and now in time of peace, that we are so prepared as to leave it little prospect of success. Instant readiness for air war is, in fact, the only way to make reasonably certain of peace, since everything will turn upon an aggressor's estimate of what he can achieve in the first few weeks. After that first stage, if we survived it, our sea-power and our vast command of oceanic resources would begin to tell their tale. But for the first few weeks everything would depend on the power of resistance, ready and trained for instant action, which we had organized in advance.

The major object of our policy is to safeguard our liberties and those of Europe without war. No European Power wants war; but Germany is prepared to make her way to supremacy by weighting her political action to the full with an acknowledged and intimidating capacity for war. Who can blame her? The Allies of 1914-1918 humbled her in the dust, and she wishes to return the compliment. She has been ruthlessly dictated to; and she is determined that other nations shall enjoy that experience. She will therefore go as far as she can, and we have no reason to oppose her so long as her ambitions do not threaten to destroy a balance in Europe which is essential to both our national security and our international ideals.

But influence for liberty and peace we shall not effectively exercise so long as she thinks us less prepared than herself for the ultimate ordeal of force; for she

may once again blunder into war, as she did in 1914, not because she wants to challenge us, but because she underestimates our material and still more our moral capacity for it. That we have at all costs to prevent.

We shall not prevent it by hoping indolently for the best. If I learnt anything as a soldier in the war, it was the awful cost and sacrifice of hoping for the best without preparing for the worst. Be ready for the worst; and if it does not happen, you are none the worse. Readiness is in any case more likely to avert the worst than unreadiness; and if the worst happens despite your readiness, the cost of meeting it is immeasurably less.

It is in that spirit that we must face the facts. Our future and that of Europe depend on it.

Comparative Air Strengths.

The facts are not agreeable. We have always been a sea-minded nation, but in the past few years we have neglected even the efficiency for immediate action of the Fleet, and we suffered, three years ago, a considerable humiliation in consequence. The League and Europe might stand differently to-day but for that lapse. It has now, however, been repaired, and the Navy is steadily expanding in concord with the naval programme of the United States.

Our record in air power has been sadly different. Twenty years ago we were easily the first Air Power in the world, but thereafter we declined from that high standard with blind indifference. The struggle to put

things right began from the very moment Germany started her rearmament, and Hansard records the efforts which were made against strong ministerial rebuffs by private Members of Parliament. The annual Conferences of the Conservative Party also did their best, but for too long without effect. The National Government was not air-minded or defence-minded in any sense. It would not face the facts till after the general election of 1935, or at least it banked upon an optimistic estimate of the facts.

In the spring of that year, before the election, Lord Baldwin pledged himself to Parliament to maintain a parity of air power in the West of Europe. The occasion was a debate in the House of Commons, and I well remember the gravity with which the pledge was given. There had been some reference to the possibility of an Air Convention for the restraint of bombing before Mr. Baldwin rose—(I must still call him “Mr.,” because I can see him standing at the box in front of the Treasury Bench as I write)—and he made some comment on that subject, saying the Government must do their utmost to secure a limitation, “But”—he went on—

“I do say that if all our efforts fail, and if this equality be not possible to be attained in such matters as I have indicated, then any Government of this country, a National Government more than any, and this Government, will see to it that in air strength and air power this country shall no longer be in a position of any inferiority to any country within striking distance of our shores.”¹

¹ *Hansard*, March 8th, 1934.

The "ifs" in this impressive statement somewhat qualified its immediate, though not its general, value; for which reason Freddie Guest and I, both loyal supporters of the Government, made bold to press for some time-limit to the process of negotiation, lest our re-armament should be delayed by it too long. We were diffident, I remember—for Mr. Baldwin plainly disliked our insistence—but we persevered and drew from him a very curt rejoinder to the effect that supporters who thought the Government could not be trusted must vote against it.

A year later, at the Albert Hall, Lord Baldwin renewed the undertaking. These were the words he used in doing so :—

"This country throughout her history has made the fundamental basis of her defence policy the defence of her coasts, of the narrow seas, and that is why for centuries the maintenance at sufficient strength of our Navy was burnt into the mind and heart of every Englishman. But to-day, as I have said in the House of Commons, it is not only the surface of the narrow seas that we have to maintain immune for our safety; it is under the narrow seas and it is equally above them, and I don't care what party is in power or what they may say in Opposition, no Government in this country could live a day that was content to allow this country to leave an Air Force under modern circumstances of any inferiority to any air force within striking distance."¹

¹ From *The Times* report, May 27th, 1935.

That forthright declaration, *The Times* records, was greeted with loud cheers by the annual meeting of Conservative women which Lord Baldwin was addressing, and *The Times* itself underlined its importance in a leading article.

Alas for democracy and its leaders! Lord Baldwin was in office for another two years, and when he left it after the Coronation in 1937, the superiority of Germany in the air was marked and incontestable.

Lord Baldwin had had great preoccupations, and he never shone in executive action. But like hosts of others, I counted—and still count—for executive drive upon Mr. Neville Chamberlain, who was as completely bound as Lord Baldwin himself by the Government declaration. Mr. Chamberlain, however, has been Prime Minister for a year, and during that year German superiority, so far from being overtaken, has gained a still greater advantage. We have been expanding at a considerable rate, but Germany has expanded a great deal faster—so much so that in March and even in May of this year Parliament was asked to regard an inferiority in air strength of at least one to two as adequate and satisfactory.

The country must appreciate the truth, and I therefore quote on the subject the published statements of two men without political bias, whose authority cannot be impugned. They are General Weygand and Sir Frederick Sykes.

General Weygand is, with Marshal Pétain, the greatest of the French soldiers still surviving from the war. He was Chief of the General Staff and head of the whole French military machine until his resignation last year.

The following figures of comparative air power are taken from a pamphlet, “*La France est-elle défendue ?*” which he published last autumn immediately after his retirement from that great position :—

First-Line Air Strength.

Germany . . .	3,000
Great Britain . .	1,500
France . . .	1,000

“First-line” air strength is generally taken to mean the strength which a country can maintain continuously in war, despite casualties in machines and personnel. It is therefore a standard which includes, not only existing machines and reserves, but also national manufacturing power. The reserve of pilots must, of course, be maintained at a corresponding level, if the standard is to be preserved.

Sir Frederick Sykes has been quoted in a previous chapter to the effect that we must expect a monthly wastage of 50 per cent in aeroplanes under modern conditions of war. That is a calculation based on actual experience in the last war, and it may very well be greatly exceeded in the initial struggles of the next. Much will no doubt depend upon the quality of the engines and frames ; but the power of rapid replacement is likely in any case to count more than the initial perfection of the machines.

This is Sir Frederick Syke’s estimate of comparative manufacturing power :—

<i>Britain</i> —maximum output per month under present conditions	200
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<i>Germany</i> —maximum output per month under present conditions	350
<i>Britain</i> —maximum war potential in factories already laid down	300
<i>Germany</i> —maximum war potential in factories already laid down	600

It seems therefore that Germany had last autumn a first-line strength and also a productive power in both cases double our own. There is little doubt that her present comparative strength is greater still, and that France is unable to fill the gap between British and German strength.

Nor is that the whole story. There is every reason to believe that the first-line air strength of Germany will have reached 6,000 by the end of 1939. Some good authorities put it much higher, and 8,000 is not an impossible figure. Wherever the truth may lie, it is imperative to put an end to optimistic illusions about the rate of German expansion. We have been proved so wrong in the past that we should work in future to the higher rather than the lower estimate.

It is, therefore, more than grave that no steps have yet been taken to secure a drastic and immediate acceleration of our rate of manufacture. The Government programme for first-line strength has been expanded under pressure from 1,750 by April, 1939, to 2,370 by the following April, 1940. This is for the metropolitan Air Force, and does not include the Fleet Air Arm or the overseas air squadrons, which would together raise the figure to 3,500.

It is hardly necessary to point out that this programme

is utterly inadequate. It should be trebled as fast as reorganization of our factories permits. That, and nothing less, the country is entitled to insist upon. We were producing over 2,000 aeroplanes a month by the end of the last war, and we must once again expand our power of output to that figure as rapidly as possible.

It is difficult to forgive our leaders or ourselves for having allowed this perilous deterioration in our security. We should have been as sensitive to air-power as to sea-power from 1919 onwards, when Lord Grey at least understood how aeroplanes might change our situation. We have always been a sea-minded people ; and we must henceforth be air-minded with equal consistency and vigilance till the shadow of the bombing aeroplane is lifted from the earth. " We cannot," said Sir Thomas Inskip, " recall the years which the locusts have eaten " ; but we must see that they eat no more, as they have been doing even since those words were spoken.

When Germany was challenging our naval superiority in 1914, there came a critical year in which the number of capital ships to be laid down by us was hotly disputed in Parliament. The Government averred that four would suffice ; the Opposition demanded eight, and feeling in the country ran so strongly with them that the Government were forced to capitulate. The Conservative refrain of the day—

We want eight,
And we won't wait—

deserves a high place amongst political slogans, for it roused the nation and gave it the margin of naval superiority which proved decisive.

On that occasion Ministers, with all their knowledge, were wrong, because, in fact, they put political consideration of various sorts before national security ; and the country saved itself by its own sea-instinct in despite of them.

We are now at an even more critical pass ; and Ministers have once again under-rated the spirit of the nation. Once again, therefore, the nation must take charge itself.

It is not ships we need most to-day, but aeroplanes. Germany's first-line strength may reach 8,000 in two years ; the possibility is incontestable. We must therefore equal that figure. Once again, the slogan—

We want eight,
And we won't wait—

should sound all over the country, since parity in the air is no less vital than command of the sea to our existence. It would certainly have been doing so for months past if the Opposition had been in power and the Conservative party in opposition.

We can do it ; we must do it ; and there is no need for alarm, if we set about doing it immediately. Though in numbers we are already at a definite disadvantage, there are other factors to be weighed in the balance of striking and staying power, and some of these are definitely favourable to us. We still therefore have time to redress our numerical inferiority. But the scales are turning steadily against us with every month that passes, and our position will be irreparable if we do not now use to the full the manufacturing and organizing powers

which are at our disposal, not only in this country but in Canada.

For the future, moreover, the need of adequate air-power like sea-power as an indispensable condition of security must, in Lord Baldwin's words, be "burnt into the heart and mind of every Englishman."

III

AIR ATTACK AND OUR DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION

In the meanwhile we have at all costs to make ourselves proof against the knock-out blow by air invasion, however suddenly launched against us.

Our Indispensable Needs.

Cannot the parties unite upon the measures that are indispensable, here and now, to give us this security? We are the only Great Power which might conceivably be reduced to surrender by ruthless air attack, and yet because of our political divisions we allow month after month, year after year, to pass in the discussion of ineffectual and half-hearted plans of organization which are utterly disparate to the jeopardy in which we stand.

The responsibility for ending this dangerous and damaging exhibition of military folly and political fear rests primarily on Ministers of the Crown; but it is shared in a considerable degree by every Member of Parliament, and it cannot be disclaimed by any educated woman or man. Every democracy, from ancient to

modern times, has run the danger of following leaders who tell it what it wants to hear and suppress what it may not like. But we have suffered enough already, before, during and since the war, from the reactions of party politics on questions of security, and it is time for all quarters in Parliament to raise and strengthen the tone of that leadership for which they are jointly and severally responsible.

The dangerous uncertainty in which we now stand could be transformed before the year is passed, if only the parties would come together on these pressing necessities. To treble our air power must indeed take many arduous months ; but we should gain immeasurably and at once by agreeing to full co-operation in setting that process at work, and we could make ourselves secure while it develops by taking the other measures of national organization which are no less indispensable and could quickly be brought into effect.

The first of these is the Register of Citizens. It is only necessary to add a little to the form of the Parliamentary Register in order to secure the information essential for that aspect of co-ordinated security. When the Register is complete, mark out for all men and women the war duty which each can best perform ; and if that duty involves enrolment or training, send to each so wanted a personal appeal on behalf of the service required. But do not send it out in any centre till the facilities for training are there. There will be an overwhelming response when once it is realized that the Government are in earnest and that those to whom they appeal will be trained and organized immediately they come to be enrolled.

There are two other essential steps. The first is to establish a priority list, so that our vital centres may be organized and equipped with adequate protection immediately. The obvious first claimants for priority seem to a layman to be these—Greater London, the munition centres and the ports.

Organization, equipment and training should be concentrated in the first instance on places in the priority list. We have not the facilities for training over the whole country simultaneously, and cannot possibly develop them without dangerous delay. The voluntary movement will moreover be ruined from the start if personal appeals are issued in any district before everything is ready to make full use of the response. There has been far too much disappointment already, and we cannot afford to allow a new appeal on the Register to suffer from it.

In the second place, a special Air Defence Authority should be set up to control the organization and make the appeal in all places on the priority list. This is a national business, and it is quite impossible that a welter of local authorities should deal effectively with it. They are not suited for it, and half of them at least are quite unequal to it.

London, for instance, is bound to come under a single command the moment war breaks out; and the central machinery should be set up at once, so that it works smoothly from the outset. The authority should be a civil one, though retired Staff officers would be simply invaluable upon it. Its function should be to appeal for co-operation from the public, not to issue commands, though it may need special powers for

calling on local authorities to do some part of the work, as many are already doing it.

The present appeal is not securing the men and women required because the organization behind the appeal is manifestly inadequate. Some local authorities are at best half-hearted; others with a better will are nevertheless incompetent; and only a minority of them can lay their hands on members or officials with the rather special capacities required for the task.

The result is that in many vital centres the danger is not appreciated and nothing adequate is being done. The situation is utterly unfamiliar, different *toto coelo* from any emergency we have hitherto had to face; and multitudes of people still think of it as a passing scare which may be dissipated at any moment by a turn for the better in the international outlook. Recruiting for A.R.P., for instance, fell off markedly when the Anglo-Italian agreement was announced, so rooted is our tendency to believe that nothing is needed for the security of our homes but a sound foreign policy and a powerful Fleet!

IV

THE NEED FOR NATIONAL UNITY

Finally, we need to show that in these vital questions of defence we are above the folly of partizan division. We have to prove ourselves the equals of a great and united people. Never before in history have 75 millions of one race and character achieved so complete and so formidable a cohesion. They believe in their leader,

they believe in themselves, they believe in their destiny. If we can evince an equal unity upon the essentials of national defence, we shall be friends with them, and the causes for which we stand will not be shaken. But division will spell humiliation.

It does not matter in this context what foreign policy the parties may desire to pursue. They may believe in collective security or isolation, in defiance or conciliation, in arbitral open-mindedness or crusading popular fronts—for all of them this danger and the duty which it imposes are the same. Whether their views are pessimistic or sanguine, cynical or credulous, idealistic or earthy, progressive or reactionary, Conservative or Liberal or Socialist or none of these things—for all of them, I repeat, this danger and the duty which it imposes are absolutely the same. Whatever their view of the future, they betray it if they do not face the immediate and paramount need for this measure of national unity.

For my part I believe that collective security and conciliation may both, within practical limits, reduce the danger which lowers in the sky. But those policies are not alternatives to national organization against air attack, for neither can be successful if our domestic security be precarious. The worst that may in reason be expected is the only legitimate test of sound defence against war. "Trust God," as Cromwell said, "but keep your powder dry." Hope and strive for the best, but be ready for the worst, since that is the only basis on which our liberties and those of Europe can be made secure.

The Government may have one policy, the

Opposition another ; but if they faced this fundamental moral issue together, their policies would come nearer to each other.

The Government have to realize that our people will never put their whole heart into organization for defence unless they are satisfied that we shall use our strength to further the ideals of law and liberty as well as British "interests." I have tried to show in past chapters that this is a fallacious distinction ; but anxiety on it is understandable after the disillusionments through which the country has recently passed, and that anxiety should be set at rest.

For no leader will ever unite our people behind him, even on the immediate requirements of defence, unless they feel that he represents the idealism which is an essential part of their being and will never sacrifice to craven expediency the liberal rôle which Britain has always played in international society. The country must, in fact, be assured that we are not sliding in matters of principle. It will not rally to a policy of "safety first" or mere expediency.

The Opposition, on the other hand, must recognize that they cannot stand effectively for democracy and the League if their sole idea of national morale is moral fervour of speech and the financing from rich men's pockets of a professional and vicarious modicum of defence. Lord Halifax put his finger on the crux of the moral issue when he said that "we shall be judged, not by our policy or by our Government, but by ourselves. If we as a nation can convince others of our purpose and of our moral and material strength, our policy will succeed."

Moral—I underline the word—as well as material strength. That is the paramount necessity on which the parties should forgo all further division.

The Peril of Drift.

Drifting is the supreme danger when a cataract lies ahead, and we must not be misled by the fact that great waters are often at their calmest before they plunge—

“As in a land of waterfalls that flow
Smooth for the leap on their great voice below.”

Drift we shall, drift in blindness, drift in folly, drift in delusive calm, so long as this country is not organized to withstand attack from the air. We can stop the drift, we alone, by proving that the new air danger, unfamiliar though it be, will not take us unprepared. All Europe is looking at us with questioning eyes, and we are stirring in our dreams; but we have not yet awoken to the full measure of our responsibility or of the peril which lurks ahead.

And meanwhile the Peace Pledge Union plants leaflets in our homes :—

“To decline to take part in Air Raid Precautions,” they say, “is to show that you are not prepared to take part in the organization of war.”

Who pays for these leaflets, and what more deadly gas could be sown from the air?

Let us then unite upon the most rapid acceleration which we can achieve in the development of air strength, and also in the production of the guns, searchlights, and instruments that break up air attack. Let us maintain the strongest system of collective security which circumstances permit, and let us make ourselves proof against sudden attack at the weakest point of our defence.

The people of this country must judge for themselves whether or not they will go to war, and no Government is entitled to pledge them blindly in advance. But other countries will trust our spirit and sense of right, if they believe us equal to any challenge that may be launched at us ; and that we shall be when once we have organized against " the arrow that flieth by night."

All other true democracies in Europe have made themselves ready to resist aggression by training compulsorily some proportion of their young men for military service and by enacting universal liability for such service in case of war. In our case the duty of preparation lies on the whole nation, but more particularly on that part of it which lives in London, the munition centres and the ports. To face that duty is the only way of keeping the twin nightmares of war and conscription at a distance from our life ; it is a duty not only to ourselves but to law and liberty in Europe, which now depend mainly upon us. By facing it we can treble the influence which we wield in the cause of peace, which is—make no mistake—the cause of liberty.

The danger across the sea mounts steadily month by month, and yet we fail to recognize that readiness to

meet it must mean national readiness against air attack—readiness, that is, at our most vulnerable point. Because the danger is unfamiliar, we try to assure ourselves that it does not exist, and that those who dwell upon it are panic-mongers or advocates of Fascism in disguise, lip-servants to freedom who wish at heart to turn their country into a totalitarian State.

There is always, it is true, a latent power in Britain which others may hesitate to provoke ; but the risks which we are running are greater than they have been for many generations past, and the cause of liberty in Europe is in our hesitating hands. It is therefore tragic indeed that the deeply imbedded fear of “conscription” should so dominate our minds and paralyze our thought ; for that very fear brings real conscription nearer every day by preventing us from taking a far more immediate danger to heart.

It may well be that if the worst came to the worst and in the very last extreme, many in this country would rather have authoritarianism in some English form than see the country reduced by internal division to humiliation and subservience. But apart from such counsels of despair which only the imminence of national disaster could produce, Conservatives are for the most part more wedded to freedom than Socialists, as any one may learn who attends a conference on land questions or forestry or anything else that touches the traditions and sanctities of country life ; and Socialists who suspect otherwise would do well to remember that the privileged and propertied classes are the first to feel the weight of a dictatorial régime. Democracy may chastize them with whips, but dictatorship would chastize them

with scorpions ; for every modern authoritarian régime is ruthless in levelling all other forms of power or caste or privilege.

There is nothing but war or intolerable danger due to inadequate defence that could possibly bring a British majority to give a Government autocratic powers ; and against that possibility Conservative, Liberals and Socialists alike can most effectively insure by helping to keep war and even the danger of it as far as possible from our horizon.

The end of a war would in any case inevitably find this country degraded into a totalitarian State. Whether that State would be Communist or Fascist in character, none can foretell ; the only certainty is that the freedom we have built up over centuries would be sacrificed to it. To plead for preparation against war at our most vulnerable point is therefore not to further totalitarianism, but to strive to make Britain safe against it.

Freedom will be lost to us if war overleaps our fences because we have been too careless to see that the topmost indispensable rail is strong and in its place ; and no man or woman is a true friend to freedom who will not cast aside that crass indifference.

PART II

THE CALL TO YOUTH

CHAPTER X

THE STRENGTH THAT TELLS

WE pass now from age and experience to youth. The generation still in power has two duties to face. One we have already dealt with ; it is the transmission to youth of that heritage of freedom which age has itself enjoyed. The other is the education of youth to be worthy of its heritage.

Liberty will never be kept by those who have no adequate sense of the service which it demands. Leadership itself, with all its powers for good or evil, is tempered and conditioned by the spirit and understanding of the people which it guides. In this free country we choose our leaders as we please, and we must be sound ourselves in our conception of their task if we are to choose them well. Nations, as a rule, get the leaders which they deserve.

Ever since the war we have been teaching our youth to nurse great expectations from the world and from the State. The world, we have told them, was made anew by our military victory and the international Covenant which followed it ; let them only be loyal to the principles of the League and they would be assured of peace and liberty without service or sacrifice. And we have spread the same one-sided idea about the State as a power which should do everything for the people without asking anything in return except

the payment of taxes—and that chiefly from the rich.

The Churches and the home have also lost influence. Parents and parsons are no longer the power in the land that they used to be ; and though the instinct for religion in some form is still manifestly strong, it is also curiously in suspense.

The reason for all this is not, I am sure, to be sought in deterioration of the race. The war gave the *coup de grâce* to an old order of ideas which had for a long time been steadily losing strength ; and we have not yet found a satisfactory moral doctrine to take its place. In this the dictators have clearly stolen a march upon us ; and while we may detest the shackles which they are binding upon the mind of youth, our hatred should not blind us to the fact that they have stirred it to a new, intense and almost sacrificial ideal of service to the nation and the State. However misguided that fervour may be, it is fervour, devotion, belief ; and freedom must produce a sense of duty equal to it in strength, if it is to hold its own in the critical years through which it has once again to pass.

These reflections are not, I am convinced, the morbid illusions of a reactionary mind, because they are shared by men and women of the most varied experience and cast of thought. Whatever he may be, Lord Snell is not a reactionary or a militarist. I quoted this passage, or part of it, in my last book *The Faith of an Englishman*, but I cannot refrain from quoting it again because it is so much to the point. It comes from a few pages of comment on the rising generation in his delightful autobiography, *Men, Movements and Myself* :—

“I try to keep loyal to my faith in them, but they sometimes frighten me. They seem for the most part to be indifferent both to their heritage and to their responsibilities. . . . They may believe in liberty and progress, but they have no disciplined passion to defend and promote these virtues. They will neither ‘fight for king and country,’ nor adequately organize themselves to prevent war. . . . Of well-sustained preparation for public work I see very little. The athlete and the cinema star are their gods.”

I have heard the same on many sides, and not least from those who share Lord Snell’s political faith. Books on the subject are multiplying every week, and every one of them is based on the conviction that all is not at present well with our youth.

Small wonder, then, that the moral content of our present system of education is the subject of much anxious thought, and that many people are considering whether it should not include the teaching of some duty and the rendering of some service to the State. The challenge with which Hitler’s Germany confronts us is moral no less than material, and we cannot hope to meet it adequately by the mere process of spending money on material armaments.

Strength is indispensable to any country which aims, like ours, at moral leadership and stands for a new code in international affairs—indispensable, moreover, in a form which cannot be supplied solely by armaments; for even military strength is not a question merely of armaments. Far more important than professional forces and the equipment by sea, land, and air, which

they require, is the moral quality of the nation as a whole. I have no doubt of that quality in Britain if once again she is put to the test; but I greatly fear, while peace hangs in the balance, an indifference to other nations' estimates of us which may bring upon the youth of this country all that they most ardently wish to avoid and compel us once again to terrible and needless sacrifice. Without a moral strength which none can mistake or minimise, conciliation will be taken for fear, and we shall find in the end that war, and war alone, will put a limit to the demands addressed to us.

In what, then, does this essential moral strength consist? There are two vital aspects in which our present showing is not good enough:—

1. Physical fitness, as to which our present standards are curiously mixed.
2. Our attitude on discipline and training as a freeman's duty to the commonwealth.

The New Spirit in Germany.

Let us take first the parallel picture of national fitness in Germany, since that naturally forms the standpoint from which Germany looks at us. A good test is the spirit in the labour camps in which all German males train for six months before they are twenty-six, the majority entering at eighteen, immediately before their army service. These labour camps were voluntary organisations before the Nazis came into power. Now

they are compulsory, and 200,000 youths pass through them every year.

There are objections to them, of course. One of these is said to be the difficulty which they create, combined with army service, in training skilled workers for industry. Another, in our eyes, is the intensive propaganda for which they are used. Professor Roberts, from whose book, *The House that Hitler Built*, I quote because he cannot be suspected of anything but deep dislike for the Nazi régime, says very truly that the young *Arbeitsdienstler* "is given a hearty and healthy life, with a premium on good fellowship and physical well-being; but mental freedom is taken from him."

Here is his summing up :—

"The physical standard of the race is undoubtedly improving. The Nazis are raising a generation of blonde physical beauties. Of the conscripts called up for service last year (1936) three men out of four were classed as physically fit, and only one in every thirty was described as unfit for service of any kind. These are the men born during the war, who were said to have been affected for life by the privations of the war and the blockade."

A democracy like ours, which means to hold its own against dictatorships, must take such evidence as this into serious account.

The most interesting point about the cult of physical fitness in Germany is that, despite the regimentation by which it is pursued, it makes for happiness. I should like to quote upon that point another observer, Mr.

Baker White, whose vivid and most readable record of a recent visit to Germany through France, *Dover-Nürnberg Return*, no one interested in reaching a just appreciation of present-day facts should miss. This is what he says of the *Arbeitsdienst* :—

“ As we motored across Germany we saw them at work here and there stripped to the waist and singing as they worked, a picture of physical fitness. Before I left London a supposedly well-informed authority told me that I should find the men of the labour camps half-starved, unhappy, and discontented. I saw their rations and found them up to the British army standard. I saw them on a long and trying parade in full kit in the blazing sun, and less than half a hundred out of 38,000 fell out. I saw them march through the crowded streets of Nürnberg the same afternoon, flowers or sprigs of heather and fir in their caps. Granted they were marching before an audience, which makes all men march well, but I have seen and done enough marching to know they were fit and happy men.”

It would be foolish to disregard this and much other testimony to the combination of mental and physical well-being produced by the Cult of the Shining Spade.

Compulsory training has not so far been introduced for women unless they happen to be marrying political leaders or going to a university, in which case they must do six months, not in camps but in houses, helping with butter-making and the like on farms. The day's work for these extends from half-past five to half-past

nine, the farmwork being interspersed with lectures, singing, and physical exercises. But though the rest are under no compulsion, a million are enrolled in the women's branch of the Hitler Youth, and two million more in the Jungmädel, which takes girls from ten to fourteen. Their life consists of marching, dancing, singing, training in every form, household science, and helping in working-class homes. Brown bodices, blue skirts, and white socks; no powder, lipstick, or rouge.

It is a hard novitiate, mostly away from home, intended to produce good wives and housewives for German men, and observers note an absence of the spring and spirit which so markedly characterise the boys. Our girls might regard it as a return to the serfdom of primitive times, but that does not appear to be the feeling of German girls. Mr. Baker White records a conversation which sums up the Nazi woman's ideal:—

“I asked a girl in the Hitler Youth what she was going to do when she was eighteen. “Marry as soon as I can,” she replied. “And then?” I asked. “Have four children as soon as possible, and I pray that three of them may be sons.”

Only the future can show whether in the long run the race will benefit.

However that may be, it is not true that the pursuit of fitness in Germany aims solely at animal health. The new German Siegfried is not a muscle-bound barbarian, even though he is being trained so intensively for the test of war; for a wider well-being is engendered

in him with truly German method by a movement which bears the title of *Kraft durch Freude*, Strength through Joy. The benefits of this organization are confined to wage-earners under a certain level of pay, and it arranges for holidays at the seaside or in the mountains, and for trips outside Germany, in return for weekly contributions on a very low scale. It is also building recreation centres—more than a hundred are already said to be complete; and it provides entertainment of all kinds, from Beethoven to musical comedy, and from Shakespeare to popular revue, at very cheap rates. Selected operas and plays are made available for 9d., and plays in outside theatres at half the normal cost. Twenty-five million people a year are said to benefit from this side of the scheme.

Another activity of the movement is the popularising and cheapening of games and sport. What with travel, music, theatres, gymnasiums, and playing-fields of all sorts, this is an imposing system of relief from the effects of drill and hard work. The Germans seem indeed to have exploited and organised leisure with as much thoroughness as everything else; and if the happiness all this activity gives is synthetic, it does not seem to compare unfavourably with other kinds of happiness.

“At first,” writes Professor Roberts, “I was inclined to interpret ‘Strength through Joy’ as a spectacular embellishment of government, but, after further investigation, I realised that it was one of the most striking forms of social service I had yet seen, and at the same time, a most efficient method

of propaganda. The Germans rank it with the Labour Service camps as a great instrument of national regeneration, and one of their most original contributions to social history."

They have good reason for the claim.

Finally, we must not ignore the strength that Hitler has given to Germany by raising the patriotic enthusiasm of her youth to fever point. This whole process represents a violent reaction from the depression and self-pity in which the nation was plunged until the Nazi movement took hold of it, and there is no doubt a strong element of hysteria in the new fanaticism of German youth. But it creates an absolutely selfless and disinterested emulation in public service which stands in signal contrast to the attitude of many in our own rising generation towards patriotic appeals of any sort, and it draws out the latent quality of many individuals which would not otherwise come to fruit.

We are not at present making the most of the quality of our own youth, and too much of it is going to waste because our system of education is still too narrow to give it the outlet and opportunity for which it is potentially fit. There is no such waste in Germany, and leaders of both sexes are picked with care from every class. That is true democracy, even though the system of government be not, and we should do well to imitate it.

In Germany a watch is kept for potential leaders, not only in the adolescent but in the youth organisations, and those selected are sent for special education in a variety of training establishments—many of them,

I believe, in beautiful surroundings, which are in themselves an inspiration. Thousands of these leaders are already at work in the labour camps. Some dedicate themselves for life to labour service, but the great majority go on to other courses specially designed to fit them for appointment to the various Government departments. The object of this training is by no means purely technical ; it aims also at drawing out the qualities required for leadership combined with selfless devotion to the public service.

More than one unofficial organisation in this country has taken up the task of leader-training ; but they have not as yet received much assistance or encouragement from the Government, and in so far as it relates to boys and girls of school age that all-important function is outside the scope of the new Act for recreative physical training. We are, of course, doing our utmost to open wide the doors of secondary and university education for all to enter who may profit thereby ; but the State which confers these benefits does little or nothing to ensure that they are repaid by a sense of duty to the State.

And yet, for the true service of democracy, that is surely an indispensable element in leadership training. I have been told again and again in recent years by the headmasters and mistresses of secondary schools that their greatest difficulty lies in persuading their charges to realise that the highest goal of education is not a safe job leading to a pension ; from which one is forced to conclude that something is lacking in the moral atmosphere which great numbers of the rising generation breathe.

It is true, of course, that training in citizenship is much simplified in a totalitarian State. Here it is complicated by a widespread conflict of theories and ideals as to the proper ordering of the State. But we must really face the question whether the best of our youth are being taught a sense of duty to their own democratic system (as to which all parties agree in principle) comparable in any way to the spirit of service which is being fostered in the future leaders of Germany. Of the young Germans trained or training for leadership Professor Roberts writes that they "are certainly marvellous specimens of their type. . . . It is impossible not to admire their physique, their unquestioning faith in an ideal, their submergence of any hint of self-seeking, and their general demeanour." A striking tribute from one who so wholeheartedly condemns the spirit of the Nazi régime. Can democracy afford to dismiss it with contumely?

The Moral Issue.

Having asked that question, let me hasten to admit that there is a great deal to be said about the strength of this country which I have left unsaid, because it does not affect the main point with which I am dealing—namely, the moral content of our system of State education. We have great reserves of moral strength, and a quite astonishing power of improvisation in emergency. When, therefore, we are told that war will strain as never before the morale of the whole nation, we may accept the fact as truth without fearing it merely as a

test of national quality. What we have to fear in another war is not so much the danger of losing it as the hatefulness of waging it and the catastrophic consequences of it, whether we win or lose, for our own social ideals and for Western civilization.

What matters most, therefore, is not the morale which wins a war, but the morale which keeps the peace, which makes a nation so manifestly strong that it can afford to be generous. That is not a question, as we seem to think at present, merely of expenditure ; wealth and moral strength by no means always go together. It is not a question of hidden moral reserves, nor of a unity and public spirit which can be counted on in time of trouble. These are all of great account ; but even more vital, for peace, is the impression which our normal way of life and education makes on other peoples, and one of the most important factors in that impression is the estimate which they form of our youth. We once ignored that truth and sacrificed a million of our best and bravest to redeem the error. Can we not nerve ourselves to-day to make misjudgement of our quality impossible ?

If that is our task, we must face with courage the fact that the present showing of our youth is extremely misleading. We are thinking much, at last, of health and physical training ; but we are still thinking too little of the moral background which is necessary to make such progress a guarantee of peace and security.

I quoted, a few pages back, from Mr. Baker White's book *Dover-Nürnberg Return*, not only because it contains some very vivid impressions of Nazi Germany, but because all he writes of the Germans is qualified and

clarified by an understanding affection for the French nation. He records in his concluding pages the comment of a Frenchman of wide European experience upon the Hitler renascence in Germany which, in this context, I cannot refrain from quoting:

“Germany is a land without liberty as we understand it in France or you in Britain, but her people have confidence in themselves and the future. I have no cause to like the Germans. They killed my son and burned my home, but that does not make me blind to their greatness.”

Their overwhelming confidence in themselves and in their star when they are on the up-grade may once again, alas, mislead the Germans. On that the French have no illusions, but they can do no more than they are already doing to avert a recurrence of the catastrophe. It is we alone who can avert it if we face with honesty and courage the moral issue which that hideous possibility presents to us.

I do not suggest for a moment that by filling the serious gaps which now exist in our educational system we shall be doing all that the preservation of British institutions and ideals requires of us. We of the older generation have to make sure of transmitting intact to our successors the great political fabric which we have once already saved in the furnace of war, and for that something more will be required of us than broader care for the morale and fitness of the young. But British childhood and youth are not as yet being adequately prepared to justify democracy and keep it

safe against a challenge which will not pass altogether from the world in our own time. To neglect then the long-range duty of making our education sounder and more complete would be sheer betrayal of our daughters and our sons.

The strength of idealism in this democracy is very great. We want immunity from the constant menace of war, and still more from war itself, not by craven isolation in a world of violence, but by using all our power to correct injustice, spread goodwill, and attune the world to peace. We thought that world already refashioned to our heart's desire through the promise of the League, and we leaned too long upon the vanishing hope that no further great effort would be required of us in our own generation or in that which will follow us. Both are now imperilled and we have girded ourselves unwillingly to the task of rearmament. All that mere expenditure can do we are doing apace. And yet the peril of war comes nearer every minute, and something more is plainly needed to enable us to wield a steadying influence.

The question is at bottom a moral one. Only wilful blindness can ignore the pride of German youth in service to their country. We may condemn their patriotism for this reason or for that, but we do not diminish it thereby. Its faith, its confidence, its readiness for personal sacrifice shine out above detraction, whatever we may say ; and there arise from it two comments on ourselves against which we were wise not to stop our ears.

The first is directed to our reliance on mere wealth for national security. " You are richer," they say, " than

any other European nation, you can get for yourselves in abundance whatever money can buy—ships, guns, aeroplanes, equipment, and professional personnel. We can do the same, though only at a sacrifice of comfort to which you cannot rise. But there are some things which no mere money can buy, of which the greatest are the sense of universal dedication to a national cause and the comradeship of all classes in peace no less than war. These things you cannot buy, and you are our inferiors in respect of them.”

The other is directed to what they regard as the softness of our youth. “Your young men and women,” they say, “are full of visions, but they are not prepared to work for those visions by service and sacrifice. They may despise our cruder views of the world in which we both live; but we are prepared to train, to forgo, to suffer and even to die that our faith may prevail. They have no such grit.”

Every visitor nowadays returning from Germany reports the growth of indifference to our standpoint and even of wholesale contempt. This is infinitely dangerous, and it must be stopped. But stopped it will not be by rearmament alone. It is—I repeat once again—a moral issue, and it turns on the training of youth.

CHAPTER XI

FITNESS AND CHARACTER

THERE can be no question that in the great affair of national health we are advancing steadily on a broad front. Parliament is constantly discussing two aspects of the problem—Housing and Nutrition; and it has recently made a definite move forward on the third, the Cult of Fitness. In the endeavour to house our people better we have for many years been doing and spending more in proportion to our numbers than anyone else, thanks principally—and in more ways than building alone—to our present Prime Minister and Minister of Health. The problems created by the movement of population to new and better homes are by no means all solved; but we have every reason to congratulate ourselves on such achievements as Manchester's Wythen-shawe Estate and others of the same character; and I am sure that no German observer of our progress in that aspect of public health would claim superiority for his own country's achievements.

Nor would Germans claim it, I think, in regard to State provision for maternal and infant welfare, except in one particular. They might indeed, easily yield the palm to us in regard to national and municipal expenditure on welfare work in official welfare centres; but they would certainly maintain that they were doing more than we are to make private welfare centres of the children's own homes by training girls in domestic

science. There are, of course, many of our elementary schools which have adequate facilities for domestic science classes, and devote some modest part of the girls' curriculum to that subject; but I do not think I am maligning our system, and I certainly speak from my own necessarily limited experience, when I say that the training of our girls in matters of health and house-keeping is lamentably defective.

Mr. Lansbury made, some little while ago in the House of Commons, a speech on our social services which appealed to me greatly. He said (I am quoting the gist from memory) that we should not be content with making health an article to be sought at Government centres; we should make it a natural growth in the homes of the people. That the Germans are doing more effectively than us, not because their people are better off economically—the fact is the exact contrary—but because they are giving much greater emphasis to health in the early education of their men and still more of their women. Childhood and youth are the decisive period. The Germans realize that fact as keenly as the Jesuits have always done, and the thoroughness of their system is remarkable.

We are now making great strides in this direction. More attention is being paid to physical training in all our schools (the infection has even reached Eton and Winchester), and still more will, I hope, very shortly be done for the provision of playing-fields, gymnasiums, community centres, and so on by the Recreative Physical Training Act which has recently come into operation. That Act is not at present achieving very much, and it is already apparent that there will have to be some

much closer liaison between the education authorities and the bodies established by the Act if its work is to be really effective. There are obvious difficulties in a system under which the provision of playing-fields and other similar facilities depends upon separate authorities according as those for whom they are needed are still of school age or over it. But those difficulties can no doubt be overcome in some way or other; and if all the authorities and organizations whose co-operation is necessary will pull together, the Act will foster health and happiness throughout the country.

Leisure and Morale.

We have still, however, many problems to solve in the task of providing our children with adequate opportunities for formative recreation in their hours of leisure. One of the most salient points of the German system is that no section of German youth (except, indeed, an unhappy but exiguous minority of ostracized non-Aryans) is allowed to think of off-time spent in loafing. The Central Council of Recreative Physical Training has been striving nobly for more than two years to tackle our deficiencies in that regard; but the gaps are painfully obvious both in town and country, and the work of the Central Council needs to be greatly extended.

There are many devoted teachers who take their children out on natural history or other expeditions; there are many admirable troops of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, Cubs, and Brownies. There are Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs of many useful kinds; and there

are many hard-working branches of such organisations as the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., and the Church Lads' Brigade. But all these devoted bodies are struggling against great difficulties, both of finance and of personnel; for they depend entirely upon the initiative of a limited number of public-spirited individuals, and the number is far too limited.

The welfare of the splendid young material we possess will never be adequately secured by an educational system which provides instruction, playing-fields, and physical training only for school hours and intervals without care for what happens to the children at other times. There are multitudes of small boys and girls who need the formative stimulus of corporate activity and amusement out of school hours and are getting none of it, simply because leaders are not forthcoming. That is the central problem, for instance, of the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movement. Troops could be multiplied and multiplied with untold benefit to our children all over the country, if only leaders could be found for them; and that is only one example of a crying lack of moral leadership in their early years which leaves a permanent mark upon thousands and thousands of our children.

The secondary schools are doing splendidly, on the traditional lines of the private and public schools, for the minority of boys and girls which enters them. But for far too many children education and the stimulus of corporate life begin and end with the hours they spend in school; for the rest of their waking hours in term time and for all their holidays they are left without guidance or occupation.

Having written and spoken a good deal on these subjects in recent months, I have found myself the recipient of a considerable correspondence which shows that the public mind is exercised about them.

A few have declared astonishment at the idea that the slaves of any dictatorship can possibly be happy—except in Russia. A few others have refused to believe that I am speaking the truth about Germany, and have accused me of a dark desire to bring about the enslavement of the British people. But the great majority have expressed a general approval; and apart from minor corrections in matters of detail none who wrote with personal knowledge of Germany has given anything but support to the comparisons which I have drawn from that country. I will tackle the question of militarist enslavement when I come to that of national morale. But before I do so there are one or two constructive suggestions on the subject of childhood and youth for which I would bespeak attention.

The Cult of the Tin Opener.

The first relates to diet; and I approach it with fear and trembling, since anyone who criticizes the food consumed by the British people is liable to be attacked from several directions. He will be told that what he attributes to ignorant or inferior housekeeping is due in truth to nothing but poverty, and that when he pleads against the excessive use of tinned foods, he is wilfully damaging a wholesome industry.

For one who knows as little as I do about vitamins,

carbohydrates and all the rest of it, this is unnerving ; a public-spirited friend of mine who made a witty speech against the Cult of the Tin-Opener was threatened with legal action, and had to take refuge in diplomatic equivocation. Let me therefore hasten to say that when I plead for better cooked and fresher food in British households, I am not thinking only of working-class families with straitened means, nor disparaging the value of many tinned products (especially the British ones), nor, despite my devotion to his interests, striking an unprincipled side-blow for the British farmer.

There is really no question that for some time past the quality of English food has been steadily deteriorating in reasonably comfortable homes where, a generation ago, it was well-cooked and nourishing ; and that it has failed to improve in working-class homes proportionately to the rise in the general standard of living. Nor is the reason at all inscrutable. Cooking in the home is a subject of much less interest and care to our present-day matrons than it was to their grandmothers. Their daughters, moreover, do not want to be taught ; and if they did, the mothers could not teach them. If the quality of food had risen as the quality of dress, it would be a different story. As things are, our standard of housekeeping is low compared with that of other nations, and the elementary education of girls has taken on a foolish superiority to domestic training.

It is common knowledge that the girls issuing from our schools are astonishingly ignorant in all such matters. They cannot cook or wash or sew ; they know

nothing about food values, and they despise domestic lore in all its branches. Registry offices report that kitchen-maids in particular are almost unobtainable, because young women contemn the kitchen and will not apprentice themselves to it. I am told that amongst the lecturers who address women's institutes and other such bodies on good housekeeping the champions of patent foods are disproportionately numerous and eloquent.

One of my correspondents, who has recently been in Germany, and writes with authority behind him, has said that he came back "lamenting the fact that, although we have the markets of the world open to us in a manner absolutely unknown to other countries (modern Germany included), our people seem to be incapable of preparing or eating food of health value." With the one exception of fresh fruit, is that statement too sweeping? No glance round most of our elementary schools would fail to discover evidence in support of it. Investigate in any English village the diet of the school-children, more especially the breakfast on which they start the day's work and the midday meal (delusive name!) which those who live at any distance bring with them. Look at many of their faces. Do the same thing in the poorer parts of any town or city. You will see that some essential element of health is plainly lacking.

It is not, as a rule, a lack of capacity for health in the bodies they were born with. The physical standard of recruiting for the Infantry of the Line is very low; but a few months of Army rations and open-air physical training works wonders, as the showing of quite recent

recruits in the Aldershot or Tidworth tattoos will prove to any open-minded observer. Nor is it entirely due to poverty. The more all families are enabled to spend on the diet of their children the better; there is no gain-saying that. But our economic standards are already higher than those of France or Germany or Italy or any other European country; it is the benefit in health which we derive from those standards that is so disappointing.

The conclusion is surely indisputable. Any campaign for national fitness which is to achieve its object must include a determined assault on the modern British attitude towards cooking and nutrition. The National Milk Publicity Council and other bodies are already doing their best in the matter, and the milk-in-schools scheme, together with the provision of free meals, shows that the Government is concerned with the need for better nutrition of growing children.

But the true key to the position surely lies in the education of girls of all classes. One is constantly told that time does not permit of more effective training in domestic science; to which it seems reasonable to reply that no curriculum can be better worth preserving than the health of the nation. We have been getting too far in our elementary education from the elementary things which make most for healthy and happy homes, and it should be possible to come nearer to them again without in any way closing the gates of knowledge to those who can really make something of a higher literary or scientific training. Our curriculum was much wiser in this respect a generation ago. It has since been steadily deteriorating.

The Sunlight of Romance.

Fresh, nourishing, and sufficient food is the indispensable foundation ; but no less important are recreative exercise, in the open-air as much as possible, and the formative use of leisure. Multitudes of our children have no chance of discovering how full of interest life can be and how amusing. To put some romance and some sense of purpose into every young mind is surely one of the essential goals of education. Romance is quickening sunlight for boyish minds and hearts, and none should lack a share of its radiance. Scouting has been universal in its appeal, because it is compact of romantic interest. Few boys are not kindled to a keener sense of what can be made of life by the call of the open trail and the ancient knightly code of courage, truth and service to humanity. These are the essence of the Scout law, and children catch the spark of it from each other in the corporate amusements and activities of Scout and Guide training.

Lord Baden-Powell's movement would not have spread across the world had parents not found it good for their sons in every civilised country. Strange that full scope should not have been accorded it in his own country ! I have been told that Hitler in his early days was so much struck by its stimulating effects that he determined to ask parents of every sort whether their children were improved by it. I do not know whether the story is apocryphal ; but there is no question that the appeal of the scouting method has been adopted wholesale in Germany and also in Italy. It is true, of

course, that under the dictatorships much propaganda is added to scout training, and that the youth movements derived from it have in consequence taken on a colour utterly at variance with the ideals of its founder. But we can keep it as British as the mind which originally conceived it, and we have even more to gain from it than the dictatorships, if we will use it in our own way for our own democratic purposes.

Let there, then, be no more narrow prejudice against it; the need for some such use of recreation is much too urgent, and no other method of comparable worth is available to us. The Scout movement can work miracles for the health, happiness, and character of British children, if we will only bring it or something like it within their reach throughout the country. Many excellent organizations are working upon it with admirable results, and much has been done to assist and co-ordinate their efforts by the Central Council of Recreative Physical Training in collaboration with the National Council of Social Service and the National Playing-Fields Association. These are all most useful and efficient bodies; but they need more money than they can raise by private subscription to spread their benefits to all British children and to train the necessary leaders. The machinery already exists in the voluntary bodies, and could be rapidly expanded.

Voluntary Bodies and Compulsion.

It is not desirable that the State should take control of all this activity. The voluntary organizations would

certainly rise to the level of their opportunity if sufficient grants were accorded them, and their work could well be guided and governed by a code of regulations framed to avert all suspicion that they were being used as the vehicles of partizan propaganda. Confidence on that point is absolutely essential ; but given such confidence, which could surely be established, there is a strong case for two further developments. In the first place, we ought, I suggest, to make membership of some organization for recreative training in leisure compulsory on all boys and girls of elementary school age ; and in the second we should include with membership the right to a fortnight's outing at a seaside or countryside camp every summer.

This great addition to our system of elementary education would, of course, cost money ; but we cannot afford to make anything less than the best of the diminishing number of children which is now being born to us, and it must be remembered that the cost of education will fall in other ways with the gradual reduction of our school population. Parliament has already determined to spend considerable sums for the recreative physical training of all above school age, and it should not hesitate to do as much for their juniors.

I am no Fascist, but I do believe intensely in giving the children of poorer parents something as like as we can make it to the all-round training long enjoyed by the children of the well-to-do. Those of us who can afford it commit our sons, and even our daughters, to boarding schools for eight out of every twelve months. There they work and play and behave as their masters and mistresses decree—generally much to their benefit.

If all children had the same chances, there would be much less need for the subsequent "suppression of vice." Practically all the children of the well-to-do play compulsory games while they are growing up and are, by long experience, the better for it. For the children of the poor, training is limited to work-time. What justifies that disabling difference?

I will admit at once that multitudes of our adolescents who leave the schools at fourteen are flung at once into the discipline of labouring for their livelihood. That is a much harder discipline than life in a public school, but it is not in any true sense education. To toil all day in the soul-less surroundings of a factory is not enlarging to the mind or spirit.

The work itself is more often than not a matter of mere drudgery; mechanical invention is steadily destroying the pride of the craftsman and materializing every form of productive labour. The atmosphere of the public school is different indeed; free from ugliness and the constant pressure of hard necessity; noisy enough, but not with the clanking of remorseless power-driven engines; material enough in many ways, but instinct nevertheless with the memory of great men and the splendour of human achievement. It is impossible to pass in mind from the discipline of the old schools to the discipline of the modern factory without burning to give all British children an equal opportunity.

That will come in time, and it will come the sooner if we look with open eyes to the spiritual no less than the material needs of the bewildered fledglings of our still most unequal democracy.

Some irreconcilables there would no doubt be to

fight the innovation here proposed for their own political reasons, on the ground that we were reinforcing the dictatorships in a reactionary campaign against freedom of education. But it is surely one thing to keep our educational system free of all dogmatic political propaganda and quite another to sacrifice the minds and bodies of our children to doctrinaires who want to inculcate a sense of injustice and inferiority because they believe in revolution. Our Labour Party is waging a gallant war against an untiring propaganda of that kind which derives a considerable part of its funds from non-British sources ; and the time has surely come to deprive it of the advantage which it derives from the widespread waste of our children's leisure.

One of the most disquieting features of the present situation is the rise in juvenile delinquency, which includes an increasing number of serious offences. The adult population's tendency to crime has been steadily on the wane for some years past ; but the rising generation, from an early age, is more than filling the gaps in prison-life which are left them by their seniors, and there is much reason to believe that this is due to neglect of our children's leisure.

A Scottish Enquiry.

I received some really startling confirmation of this from an unexpected quarter when I wrote upon the subject in the *Observer*. It came in the form of a Leisure Survey compiled by the West Lothian Head Teachers' Association, and I have the permission of the Chairman

of the West Lothian Education Committee to give it further publicity. The survey is based on a very careful and detailed enquiry carried out by a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Clarkson, Rector of the Broxburn High School, to whom I am greatly indebted for first making it known to me.

The object of this investigation was to discover how the children of the West Lothian schools, Senior (9 to 12), Intermediate (12 to 15), and Secondary or Post-Intermediate, "used their leisure"; and the first question to which an answer was sought was the extent to which "child life in the county was organized after school hours."

Here is the answer :

"Pupils were asked to say to which of the following organizations they belonged, such as Boys' Brigades, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Boys' Guilds, Y.M.C.A., Young Men's Societies and Junior League of Nations Unions. This was supplemented by further questions relative to attendance at church or kindred associations such as Bible Classes, etc.

"It has come as a surprise to learn that even among the seniors where a high degree of organization might have been expected 75% of the total roll do not belong to any organization whatsoever. Evidently the above-mentioned agencies have only a precarious hold in West Lothian; and stranger still is the fact that this percentage tends to decrease in the intermediate and advanced sections of the school. Indeed, if we abstract the figures relating to church association of all kinds, the remaining proportion of organized

community life for children falls as low as ten per cent of the total population of the schools.

“It may be further pointed out that this lack of social organization is not counterbalanced by any high degree of organized home life. As we shall see later the evidence points in the opposite direction. At the same time, it may be opportune to contrast this chaotic disorganization of leisure with the 100 per cent organisation of leisure which is the educational ideal of certain foreign States and to a lesser extent of the United States of America. *One conclusion is quite inevitable. These figures dispose entirely of the oft-repeated criticism that organized bodies outside the school are seriously interfering with the educational attainments of the child. Actually, the reverse is the case.*¹ Indeed it seems not unlikely that the constant complaint of wide-spread public indifference to both local and State affairs is directly traceable, in part at least, to the unorganized condition of the school child and later of the adolescent. It is not the business of the report to argue for more or less organization. We take it that our duty is to get at the facts as they are and to state them as shortly as possible.”

There follow the results of detailed enquiries into the percentage and frequency of children's attendance at cinemas and billiard-saloons ; into the character and amount of home-reading ; into the appeal of sport ; into the influence of the wireless ; into parental supervision ; into juvenile delinquency ; and finally into the facilities for home work which are available for children.

¹ The italicized passages in this and all other extracts from the Survey are italicized in the original.

On all these subjects the Survey makes interesting and very disquieting reading. The annual cost of cinema attendance for rather less than 8,000 children at 3d. to 5d. a seat was found to amount to well over £5,000, and this figure did not include infants and juniors. The general result is to show that 90 per cent of the children derive more harm than good from their long hours of leisure. The unfairness of it, compared with the lot of boys and girls of what is called "the public school class," is heartrending.

The authors of the Survey express their feelings on the subject with appealing candour:—

"A sense of exasperation comes over us when we begin to realise the futility of our work. Many of us have noted with pain the quick deterioration that affects a large proportion of our boys especially on leaving school. We had put it down (in all humility) to the sudden loss of discipline, the absence of the eye of the master and the unsavoury currents of the street. We were not wrong, perhaps. But we did not know that this deterioration was simply a quick and fatal outgrowth of habits of leisure which developed without interruption in the years when they were under our care.

"It is only natural that members of the Education Committee may also experience a feeling of exasperation. But they may be reminded that until the problem was investigated by the Headteachers' Association, the extent and nature of it were not fully realised. The remedy will require to be found, but it is more than probable that the discovery of the cure will be

the result of genuine experiment rather than of preconceived opinion. It is a problem as compared with which many of the modern controversies in education, viz., the clean cut at twelve, retardation, even the raising of the school age, pale into comparative insignificance. We may fix the "clean cut" where we will, we can retard with every advantage known to educational science, we may raise the school age indefinitely, but unless some way of dealing with this problem is found, we will discover that all our works are overthrown during the night. It has already been remarked that in other countries, notably Russia, Italy, Germany, the tendency towards "group" community life does at least something to lessen the problem. In Germany, for example, there is a degree of regimentation which would never be tolerated here. The whole life of both school and University is organised with the purpose of eliminating purposeless leisure. Agencies are everywhere at work from the Hitler Jugend of the schools to the Kameradschaften of the Universities which, when they are fully developed, will embrace every student of the German Universities. That is, of course, one way of solving the leisure problem, but it is unlikely to be ours. It is cited merely to convince the reader that other countries have not been slow to realise the seriousness of the problem."

As regards juvenile delinquency, they believe that many cases should be referred to the schools rather than the law courts, and they plead in any event for a change of method :—

“On the whole, while we have to admit that the figures relating to Theft by Housebreaking, Theft and Malicious Mischief are fairly high, and while there is evidence to prove the existence of small ‘juvenile gangs,’ it seems to us that the figures of convictions in the County are really inflated far beyond normal limits as a result of the fact that entirely wrong methods are being applied. Whether this view is accepted or not, the conclusion cannot be avoided that the present methods applied to delinquency are doing nothing to cure it. On the contrary, it is everywhere on the increase.”

Finally, they call attention to the need for enquiry into the improper employment of children, which is not in their opinion being adequately handled. This is a brief passage in the Survey, but one which certainly calls for active consideration.

The authors’ concluding observations are too moving to be summarized and I must quote them in full :—

“What principal impression is derived from the survey as a whole? It may be interesting, but it is not a happy one. *We carry away the impression of the huge wastage of child life* : it is a story of waste all along the line, a story of lack of effort and mis-directed effort. It is also the story of to-morrow, and that is its most tragic feature. It may be quite true that our children to-day are living in a disillusioned world and so reflecting much of its apathy and indifference. But that is not the material out of which individual, national, or imperial destiny is to be framed.

"In the second place, we can see only too clearly the very limited function of the schools. It is quite clear that most of our day's work is undone during the night. The majority of children return to a very different atmosphere, to different masters and to a different system of supervision and discipline. The organisation of child-life practically ceases at 4 o'clock.

"In the survey everything possible has been done to keep out exceptional and sensational cases. For example, the case of the boy who is being given anti-tuberculin injection on the Monday and put up for three rounds in a boxing ring on the Tuesday night, this, and many other cases of flagrant abuse have been deliberately kept in the background. Much of such evidence tends to create a jaundiced view-point and to absorb too much attention.

"Finally it is to be hoped that some of the established facts which have been stressed in the text may induce a new attitude in the approach to general educational problems. As has been continuously suggested, we have all been guilty of thinking about education from a traditional or a purely abstract or even a preconceived point of view. We have forgotten the important background of the child's leisure life. From this point of view, the school itself appears in a new perspective. It is easier to understand failure, lack of interest and social deterioration if we know the background of the leisure life ; and it is less easy to be satisfied with what we have done."

If these are the conclusions of a committee of conscientious and sympathetic teachers in West Lothian

one wonders what would be revealed by an equally thorough enquiry in some of our great cities—and more particularly London. Mr. Clarkson, in forwarding the final copy of the Survey to me, suggested that there is need for a national investigation. I wholeheartedly agree with him. This country will always take action on such facts as this enquiry reveals, when once it is enabled to appreciate them.

In the meantime we shall, I fear, be compelled to go on listening to the argument that the guidance and discipline which shape the children of the well-to-do in costly educational establishments are not to be extended in any form to the children of the poor for fear that Fascism may fasten on their hungry minds and proceed to regiment and enslave them. The argument is sheer defeatism, and democracy will not long survive the waste of quality and character for which it is responsible; but it seems to have a sinister hold upon us. Would that some Charles Dickens would arise to make us understand its heartlessness and its stupidity!

The Yaffle Philosophy.

It is, I maintain, sheer defeatism to say that the dictators can use for their own purposes all the romance and all the eager desire for active companionship in doing this or that which stirs the heart of youth, but that democracy cannot do so without destroying itself. Under the inspiration of the cinema our ragamuffins may form themselves into Black Hand Gangs and call down upon themselves the heavy hand of the

criminal code; and we are to let this anarchy spread merely because we are afraid that the children of the poor will be enslaved by a touch of the wholesome discipline which does nothing but good to the children of the more prosperous!

When I wrote in the *Observer* not long ago about the "formative use of our children's leisure," I was very wittily taken to task by a writer who signed himself "Yaffle" in *Reynold's News*. "Yaffle" accused me, of course, of Fascist leanings or worse, and made great fun of the idea that the discouragement of Black Hand Gangs can possibly be achieved without turning our children into serfs:—

"I think we can now see the future of British democracy shaping itself.

"I see every minute of a child's leisure time filled up with Corporate Amusement and Formative Recreation. . . .

"Loafing will be abolished. It is felt by the Inculcators that loafing in leisure time encourages such dangerous habits as meditation, contemplation, criticism, and receptivity to unusual ideas. Most of our dangerous thinkers, from Shelley and Rousseau downwards, were observed to loaf considerably during childhood.

"Joie de vivre, some expression of which is considered essential to mental health during infancy, will be permitted at specified hours, under the supervision of trained instructors.

"Particular care will be taken to inculcate the idea that patriotism comes before having a good time.

Any child failing to utter some phrase expressive of patriotic devotion—e.g., ‘Rule, Britannia!’—before kicking a football, eating a bun, or performing any other action deemed to be a Good Time within the meaning of the Act, will be liable to the infliction of the Statutory minimum smack.

“For of such is the Kingdom of Corporate Recreation.

“It may be argued that when these ideals are realised there will be no democracy left. Possibly, but it was not my intention to define systems. It was my purpose to follow a distinguished Tory on a voyage of discovery and see where he got to.

“And I find that, having set out to discover the moral background of democratic education, he has arrived, with the blessing of a bishop, at an excellent definition of a Fascist State.”

This is admirable fooling; but alas, for many of our people it is the pure milk of the gospel, wisdom’s own accents, the very voice of liberty! And I quote it because it is a first-rate example of the argument that the training of youth in a sense of service to the State is incompatible with democracy.

Shelleys, after all, are rarer than Kohinoor diamonds, or they would not be Shelleys; and no educational system can be sensibly based on the idea that theirs is the type of mind that we must cater for. Let us not forget, moreover, that the freedom which Shelley, Wordsworth and Byron sang was saved for us by conscript soldiers and sailors. Without the press-gang there would have been no Trafalgar and no Waterloo.

I am not arguing for a modern adaptation of the methods by which we successfully resisted Napoleon; but I do protest against the suicidal notion that a democracy like ours can survive the challenge of the dictatorships without inculcating some sense of duty to the State in those who enjoy its benefits, and I repudiate with scorn the equally suicidal idea that service and serfdom are synonymous. When we recoil from Nazism, Fascism and Communism, it is not because of the sense of service which they foster, but because they subordinate mind and conscience alike to an intolerant tyranny.

The mysticism which enthrones the State as a power superior to the minds and consciences of the men and women composing it is to us reactionary, because we believe that the State exists to serve man, not man the State. I do not know a simpler exposition of our fundamental belief upon this point than that with which Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, the courageous Austrian advocate of a United States of Europe, prefaces one of his illuminating books.

“Man (he writes) is the creature of God. The State is the creature of man.

“The State therefore exists for the benefit of man, not man for the benefit of the State.

“It is possible to think of men without a State, but not of a State without men.

“Man is an end, not a means. The State is a means, not an end.

“The worth of a State depends therefore entirely on the service it renders to men. In so far as it serves

the flowering of man, it is good ; in so far as it prevents that flowering, it is bad.

“ Thus the State can be either the friend or the enemy of man, according as it furthers or confines his freedom, security and development.”¹

The freedom of the individual is, of course, restricted in many important ways by every State. “ Liberty,” as Burke said, “ must be limited to be possessed.” We have our criminal code, taxation for the maintenance of the public services, compulsory education for the young, and a multitude of laws imposed by the majority which the minority accepts. But none of these restrictions must, in our conviction, touch the essentials of freedom—freedom of conscience and thought, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and freedom to make and change our Governments as a majority of the nation may wish. Totalitarianism abolishes the freedom of the individual in all these essential respects. We regard it therefore as an enslaving tyranny.

But training for service to the State is no such tyranny—witness our sister democracies, witness especially Switzerland, so kin to us in character, so loved by generations of Englishmen.

“ Two voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice ;
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty ! ”

¹ *Totaler Staat—Totaler Mensch*, by Count R. L. Coudenhove-Kalergi.

That is from Wordsworth's "Thoughts of a Briton on the subjugation of Switzerland," one of the wonderful series of sonnets and poems which he dedicated "To National Independence and Liberty." Yet Switzerland then had universal and compulsory military service, and she has it still, extended in period some few years ago on plebiscite by an overwhelming majority. Truly, Yaffle's cap and bells would get short shrift from Swiss democracy!

While Britain was still an island, we could afford without extinction to indulge the Yaffle philosophy; but it is high time to emerge from its comfortable complacency now that we are menaced in the very heart of our sanctuary. For our children are our destiny. Let us remember that upon us and our immediate successors depend the peace and welfare of a great part of the earth's inhabitants, and that we cannot abdicate from that responsibility or evade it by neglecting it. It is a fateful load, and we must bear it, like Atlas, or be destroyed by it. For it is not our insular freedom only that is at stake; it is the future of a world-wide political system which is building up, slowly, maybe, but steadily, the right and capacity of men to govern themselves, together with the institutions, delicate in their infancy, which will enable them to do so. It is also the liberty of Europe once again in jeopardy.

If our political system were to weaken and dissolve, the struggle for its heritage would be far vaster than that which marked the decline and fall of the Roman Empire; and who can say that in the struggle, another age of darkness would not overwhelm our Christian civilization? It is therefore no rhetorical exaggeration,

but a plain statement of inescapable truth, that the peace and progress of the world will depend in this twentieth century upon the character of the British Parliament and electorate. That central responsibility will not grow less. On the contrary, it will become harder to discharge with every advance that is made in local responsibility. We are but forty-five millions, we upon whom it principally rests, and our numbers will soon be diminishing. But we have the quality if we will use instead of wasting it; and the key to its use is early education, moral and physical no less than intellectual, not only in worktime, but in leisure.

CHAPTER XII

THE NATION AND ITS LEADERS

THE institution of a period of compulsory training in social or military service for all young men is much in people's minds at the present moment. Some regard the question from the purely military point of view, but these are not numerous. Some connect it with the defence of the country against air attack. Some base themselves on fitness—an argument which in the old days of Lord Roberts's campaign before the war we used to call the Skegness formula, because of a Skegness advertisement, "So Bracing," which was then very prominent. On all sides there is evidence that the attitude of young Britons towards the State is causing anxious thought.

The opposition school is in consequence far less positive than of old. There is still, of course, a mass of people who scent Fascism or militarism in any proposal for compulsory training, whatever its character. There are others who maintain that young men of the poorer classes cannot be expected to recognize any duty to the State until the State has shown a greater sense of duty towards them. But the confident condemnation which used to greet every proposal of the kind has faded into the past. With the curious tidal swing which marks our democracy's processes of thought the question is now an open one, posed for debate.

Diana of the Ephesians.

I have long ago committed myself publicly to the view that our decision on this question will determine not only the peace of Western Europe in the years immediately ahead, but the fate of democracy in the present stage of its development. Democracies have perished again and again in the last two thousand and five hundred years, and always, it would seem, for the same reason—that the character and capacity of the people fell below the very high level which the successful practice of democracy demands. History has repeated itself twice and thrice in that respect before our living eyes.

It is idle, therefore, to suppose that democracy can be preserved by mere enthusiasm about its blessings. The Ephesians who shouted for Diana because of the benefits which her cult bestowed upon them succumbed in due course to men who preached and practised a harder way of life, and democracy must beware of the same fate. It must, in consequence, maintain that discipline of mind in leaders and people which alone prevents human beings and societies from burking unpleasant realities and following the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

Discipline of mind, not only in leaders but in the people. Democracies make a habit, when things go awry, of turning and rending their leaders. The responsibility of leaders is, Heaven knows, immense; and no one will pretend that they are always blameless. But this country

has never lacked leaders of the right stamp when it was prepared to use and trust them ; and if it finds itself badly led, that is usually because it has itself rejected good leadership or made it impossible.

It was not the fault of Pericles, the statesman, that he was bested at a critical moment by the demagogue Cleon. Mr. Lloyd George was not responsible for all the blots in the Peace Treaties ; democratic opinion at that time was intractable and virulent. Lord Baldwin was, no doubt, slow to admit to himself and others the pressing need for rearmament ; and the explanation which he made of the delay certainly shook us to the marrow. But we have since been too ready to dismiss that explanation as a leaders' reflection on his own private failings ; it would be wiser to take it as a public warning.

In a democracy the interaction between leaders and people is a highly complex business ; and I shall not make bold to deny that the greater responsibility rests upon the leaders, since they are armed by office with a wealth of information which is shared by very few others. But what the leaders of one generation can do depends very largely upon what their predecessors did to form the mind of that generation when it was growing up. Every generation must therefore look to the character it is shaping in its sons and daughters as well as to immediate expediency, and it must seek to build up in the young through the great social services those qualities of mind and body which make for public spirit and sanity.

Of the social services education in all its facets is by far the most important. No long-ranged branch of policy approaches it in influence upon the future of

the race ; and no aspect of education, from childhood up to the full enjoyment of a citizen's powers and privileges, calls for greater care and thought than the relation which it teaches between the individual and the commonwealth. Therein resides the ultimate test of every system of government, and all leadership is conditioned by it. Of that the dictators are signally aware. Are we, for our part, giving it adequate consideration? To shout like Ephesians for our beautiful Diana will not suffice alone to preserve her against her enemies.

A Glance Round Europe.

We enjoy at present the curious distinction of being the only free nation in Europe which demands no form of national service from its young men before they obtain and use the franchise. Hungary and Bulgaria are, it is true, in the same case—not, however, because they desire it, but because they are still bound by the military clauses of the Treaties of Peace. It was strange that we imposed this limitation on all the vanquished countries without even suggesting it to the many new democracies which the Peace Treaties set up.

The triumph of dictatorship in Germany has no small connection with that fact. Germany flung the restriction to the winds when Hitler came into power ; Turkey had already done so years before ; Austria has now followed suit ; the other two, Hungary and Bulgaria, murmur and await their chance. These countries, however, are taking no action which has not been common form throughout the length and breadth

of Europe for decades past. Many people in this country still seem to think that conscription, as they call it, is a mark of aggressive militarism, natural to dictatorships but inconsistent with the democratic faith. If only they would face the facts !

In democratic France, for instance, the period of military service obligatory on young men of every class is now two years, and conscripts, if needed, are bound to three years' immediate further service after that. "Naturally," some may retort, "since France has aimed at a military hegemony of Europe quite inconsistent with our ideals of peace." Granted that French policy since the war has sometimes deviated from the course which we desired to set, where, nevertheless, would democracy stand to-day without the patriotic service of French youth ?

Eliminate, however,—for the sake of argument—the French example and the whole circle of French influence. The duty of military service is universal and compulsory in all the remaining democracies—Scandinavia, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, the Republic of San Marino, and the smaller Baltic States. The only States which do not impose it are Luxemburg, the Vatican City and Monaco. Of these we may make a present to the other side of the case.

All the democracies which I have named would be stupefied to learn that any principle embedded in their national life was militarizing in its effects. Their nature, and their history put that notion out of court, and those who have relied upon it as a proposition of universal validity would be wise to abandon it.

Let us then dismiss the idea that compulsory military

service is of necessity and in all cases inconsistent with freedom and the love of peace, and with it the further proposition that, since we keep a Navy sufficient to preclude invasion of our island by any large host, we are not entitled to do what other peaceable nations do because, in our case, it would be considered aggressive in intent. There is not a pacifically minded country in Europe where the adoption of universal military service by us would not be hailed as a heartening reinforcement of peace. The satisfaction created amongst all such Powers by our rearmament is sufficient to establish that as fact.

The Party System and Its Cost

We have learnt in recent years the truth about the failure of Lord Roberts's campaign for national service—a lesson we should not forget. In the first volume of Mr. Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* the story is told at some length, and I will quote freely from his version of it in order to avoid the imputation that I have adorned it with any misleading gloss.

The story begins with the record of a conversation between Mr. Lloyd George and Count Metternich, the German Ambassador in London, held in July, 1908. The discussion dealt chiefly with naval programmes, and Mr. Lloyd George concluded his observations on that point with the following remark:—

“ I said to him, ‘ If this rival shipbuilding goes on to such an extent as to render our people seriously

apprehensive of invasion we shall be driven inevitably to adopt conscription and thus raise an army capable of defending our shores against any invader.' He replied quite curtly, 'Do you think we should wait?'¹

The Kaiser's reactions to this sally were different. They are to be found in his marginal comment on Count Metternich's report of the conversation, since published by the German Government. Against the passage dealing with the threat of conscription in England he wrote "Tant mieux" and "It would do them good"; but he put fifty years in place of Count Metternich's estimate of ten for the maturing of the threat.

The fact undoubtedly is that the Kaiser utterly underestimated our capacity for tackling such a task, and that the majority of Germans shared his opinion. Mr. Lloyd George gives an example of this in describing a conversation with the Vice-Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, which took place at a dinner in Berlin the following August. The Vice-Chancellor's observations on the point are of special significance because he had a son at Oxford and was always, as we now know, for keeping on good terms with us.

This is Mr. Lloyd George's arresting account:—

"Incidentally, he let in a flood of light upon the view of the ordinary German as to the decadence of England. He was clearly of the opinion that we were no longer a hardworking people; he thought that we loved our ease too much, and that we were a nation of week-enders. He gave a description of

¹ *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, Vol. I, pp. 12-13.

his own day: how he rose at seven o'clock, and worked until eight; then went for a ride until nine, then had his breakfast; afterwards resumed his daily tasks; worked practically till dinner, and kept going right through the week. He said, 'In England, you go to your office at eleven; you have a long luncheon hour; you leave at four; on Thursday you go to the country; you remain there until Tuesday morning, and you call it a week-end!

"It is fair to say that this was after dinner! But I am not at all sure that this revelation of the Continental pre-war idea of English degeneracy had not something to do with the contempt with which military Germany contemplated the possibility of our intervention later on. It was very generally assumed that English fibre had been softened and disintegrated by prosperity. The poor show we had made in the Boer War had confirmed this idea."¹

Mr. Lloyd George goes on to say that his reference to conscription in his conversation with Metternich "was by no means a casual sentence thrown out by me as a debating point in the course of an argument. Still less was it a piece of bald bluff."² In fact, he returned to the charge two years later when he submitted to Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, a memorandum proposing a truce between the parties for the purpose of dealing with the four most critical issues of the moment—Second Chamber, Irish Home Rule, the fiscal question and national defence. This was between the two General Elections of 1910.

¹ Ibid, Vol. 1, pp. 30-1.

² Ibid, pp. 32-3.

All in the memorandum that here concerns me is Mr. Lloyd George's plea for a system of national training for defence on the Swiss model, put forward, he records, because of his apprehension as to "what the unknown future had in store for us if science neutralized the efficiency of our warships." He was thinking, it is to be presumed, mainly of such menaces as the submarine; and that alone, in the sequel, very nearly brought us to our knees. And yet we scorned that menace with a blind and bigoted obstinacy which was barely overcome before it was too late—a performance worth remembering now that science has created an even more serious menace to our careless sense of insular security.

The project was so far approved by the Prime Minister and his chief colleagues, including Lord Grey, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Churchill, the First Lord, and Mr. Haldane, the Secretary of State for War, that it was submitted to Mr. Balfour, then leader of the Opposition, who discussed it with his own colleagues and found them in principle not unfavourable to it. Lord Lansdowne, the late Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain were among those who gave it their blessing provided the party in general could be won over to it.

The publication of Mr. Lloyd George's account of the matter was, if I remember rightly, followed by some public controversy as to the reasons for which his proposal broke down, and they scarcely matter now except to remind us of what we subsequently paid for the fact that they prevailed. On this let me quote once again Mr. Lloyd George's own words:—

“ Even if the existence of such a formidable force had not influenced the course of events in the direction of peace, the contribution made by it in the earlier stages of the War might well have been decisive and have shortened the term of this devastating struggle.”¹

The locusts of the Party system—what in periods of danger we pay for them !

Despite the failure of the proposed party truce in 1910, Lord Roberts, with splendid resolution, pursued his campaign, and he drew from Mr. Asquith in February, 1914, an answer to a deputation which is also worth remembering at the present time :—

“ I gladly recognize the truth of what Lord Roberts has said in his introductory remarks, and of what was repeated by more than one subsequent speaker, that it is not a matter which ought to divide us upon what are commonly called party lines ; because home defence is a common interest to all parties, and whatever can be proved to be essential for that purpose ought to be universally accepted as being beyond the region of party controversy. . . . The more this matter is discussed, and the more public opinion can be brought to bear upon the aspects which you have put to me to-day, the greater will be the advantage to the community, both from the point of view of safety and of educational and social problems.”²

¹ Ibid, Vol. 1, pp. 38-9.

² Quoted by Mr. Coulton from the *Westminster Gazette* of February 27th, 1914, in *The Case for Compulsory Service*, p. 191.

I do not know whether those words drew any response from the Opposition of that time. Probably not. Controversy on the Irish question was running as high as controversy on foreign affairs to-day, and all considerations paled before that raging fire—even the menace of war. I think, therefore, that Mr. Lloyd George is just in his final comment on what he calls the “Great Refusal” of 1910:—

“There is much to be said in favour of the Party system. The open conflict of Parties is better for a country than the squalid intrigues of personal ambitions or of rival interests conducted in the dark. But there are times when it stands seriously in the way of the highest national interests. On these occasions it hinders, delays and thwarts real progress, and in the event the nation suffers heavily. I shall always regard the rejection of the proposals for co-operation in 1910 as a supreme instance of this kind of damage. On the other hand the ground for co-operation must be one of genuine national well-being. A suspension of Party hostilities merely in order to ensure a distribution of patronage and power amongst the leading contestants, degrades and enervates politics.”¹

The Test of Parliament

I have not recounted this sad history in order to cast reflexions upon politicians, since I myself am a humble

¹ *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, Vol. I, pp. 40-1.

member of that clan. No man who is leading the country in a period of danger can lightly broach an issue which may divide it from stem to stern.

The trouble is that widespread agreement between the parties behind the scenes on a subject of vital national concern may be overlaid and reduced to naught by the weight of their differences on other things. That killed the project of citizen service before the war; and I believe that again to-day it is killing a measure of concord on some vital aspects of defence which would otherwise transform our showing in the eyes of the world.

There is therefore some excuse for the view so frequently trumpeted in Germany and Italy that the outlook and temper of the chief democracies are making sage and efficient leadership in some respects impossible. They look at the United States and see there a clash of forces of the gravest kind due, as they consider, mainly to the temptations and deficiencies of democratic leadership in the post-war period. They look at France and are moved to the same reflection, despite the patriotism of her people in national defence.

In our case, the criticism is different, but it is nevertheless disquieting. They would admit that in 1926, the year of the general strike, as also in 1931, when our credit nearly collapsed, and again in 1936 throughout the constitutional crisis caused by the Abdication, this nation showed great calmness, judgement and unity. "But," they add, "your leaders seem always to halt until a crisis is on them which can no longer be avoided. That is probably not their fault; it is the fault of democracy. Lord Baldwin said so, and he spoke from long experience." Our good old locusts again!

The only effective answer is to take by the forelock every measure which will make our future more secure ; and of these immediate proof that youth in this country is bound by some duty to the State is the most imperative.

Collaboration between State and people is rapidly transforming the relations between private enterprise and the public interest. Acceptance of some duty to society and of some control by it is becoming an indispensable condition for the enjoyment of rights and powers derived from the State. It is on that principle, and on no other, that youth should undergo some short period of service to the commonwealth in return for a life enjoyment of freedom, the franchise and the social services.

Our problem is to achieve a system of national organization in all essential branches of our life without the regimentation which stifles freedom and without the bureaucratic control which confines initiative to the State. Government and people must work together as they have never done or had need to do, except in war, if our heritage is to be safe. If but youth can be trained in understanding of that principle here and now, it may cast aside the worst of its present apprehensions and march into the future confidently.

Cannot Government and Opposition accept that principle, too, on the broad issues of national defence, despite their differences on public policy over the rest of the field ? The Parliament in which they operate now holds the liberties of Europe in its hands—the liberties of Europe, from which our own are inseparable !

CHAPTER XIII

THE CASE FOR CITIZEN TRAINING—I

I DEALT in the first part of this book with the immediate necessities of national defence and showed that they demand a very special effort from citizens of all ages who are free to serve and fit. I firmly believe that such an effort, based on a Register of Citizens but voluntary in character, will meet the more pressing needs of the situation and transform our standing as the protagonists of peace.

But when that effort has been made, it will leave us with a problem of much longer range—namely, how to provide for our future security without war scares, crippling expenditure and a constant disturbance of civil life. The menace of the bombing aeroplane will remain with us for many years to come, and we have to find some quiet and steady means of keeping it at arm's length till some Heaven-sent inventor makes us once again a sea-bound sanctuary immune from sudden attack.

Let us take the military or Army problem first, since that most directly trenches on civil life and since it is the only branch of national defence in which a reduction of expenditure may be possible without loss of efficiency in the absence of an all-round limitation of the present competition in armaments. For this latter we must, of course, strive with all our strength; but we must also strive by any method available to us to limit the drafts which are now being made on our financial reserves and on the sinews of social betterment.

There is unfortunately no hope of using citizen service to effect an immediate reduction of expenditure on home defence. The Regular Army must take its share in home defence for the time being despite the cost involved. Citizen training would not mitigate the cost for some time to come, even if it were introduced to-morrow, nor could it with all the goodwill in the world be fairly applied to the adult population. The nation must have time to weigh the pros and cons in all their bearings, since no Government could dream of proposing it to Parliament without a certainty of widespread national approval.

The measure, in any case, is one for youth as it approaches manhood. That is the practice in other democracies, since there are overwhelming reasons why the service asked of the adult citizen of all ages in peace time should be purely voluntary in character. Compulsion all along the line, in industry as well as for A.R.P. services, Territorial service and the various public utility services in cities and towns, would in truth be totalitarian conscription; and however inevitable in war, it is inconceivable in peace in any democratic country.

But supposing that you exempt from such conscription, as you certainly must, all those whose normal employment will also constitute their war work, how can you possibly apply compulsion to the remainder of all ages who are free for Territorial or A.R.P. service? The whole method would be hopelessly inequitable and could not possibly work. No free democracy could tolerate it for an instant, and it would therefore break down at once. If people identify national service with compulsion or conscription on those lines, it is no wonder

that they recoil from it as totalitarianism and refuse to think of it.

The compulsion or conscription of adult citizens for personal service of any sort is indeed entirely different in principle from the compulsory training of youth. Youth is under compulsion in any case till a more or less advanced age in the process of being fitted for life, and with us the compulsion lasts longest as a general rule in the public school class. Boys of that type accept the rigorous discipline of school life without question just as in other democracies their contemporaries accept the discipline of military training for whatever period is laid down by the State, and no one suggests in either case that they are compromising thereby their future independence of mind and character as freeborn adult citizens.

Military training is quite properly regarded as a part of education when it is taken, as it generally is, before a citizen reaches his majority and obtains the vote ; and when once it has been taken, the citizen is free from all military obligation except that of taking a few " refresher courses " of very short duration and of remaining liable for military service if called upon in emergency. That minimum of compulsion upon the adult citizen in time of peace is not different in principle from jury service, which everyone in this country accepts ; and as for the liability for service in war, it was a principle of the Common Law of England for more than a thousand years that every able-bodied male should take his share, when called upon, in the defence of his country. The principle was very improperly repealed, seven years before the war, by the Territorial

Army Act; but it remains, by general recognition, the first of the obligations which war would force upon us, and the legislation enforcing it is known to be ready for presentation to Parliament.

It is therefore essential to distinguish clearly, as few in this country yet have done, between the democratic principle of training young men for service to their country in case of need and the totalitarian principle of putting citizens of all ages at the beck and call of their Government even in time of peace. We could not possibly adopt the latter without in very truth compromising the liberties which are the salt of our life; and I therefore rule out as inconceivable the idea that a Register of Citizens should be used to introduce compulsion of any sort. But we are likely, I believe, to be confronted before long with cogent reasons for giving some training in social or military service to our able-bodied youth.

Let us assume that the call to all citizens who can be spared from other duties for voluntary Territorial or A.R.P. service has produced the desired results, as I believe it will, and that the nation is provisionally organized against any emergency that may confront it in the next two or three years. That result will have been secured by a very special appeal not unlike a war scare, and those who respond to the call may have to do so in many cases at considerable personal sacrifice. It is idle to suppose that a special national effort so produced will remain at concert pitch for more than a limited period. Ardour will cool, people will move, other duties will obtrude themselves, and without any real falling off in public spirit the readiness and efficiency of the services will be impaired.

We cannot in reason or dignity make good that inevitable process of deterioration by beating the war drum afresh year after year. The process of doing so is humiliating enough as it is, and suggests a lack of public spirit in the nation which is not in accordance with facts. In the military sphere, for instance, the weekly announcements of improved recruiting figures may stimulate patriotism here, but they are used to make us ridiculous by comparison with other nations in the propaganda of militarist States. To this we are condemned, not by lack of patriotism, but by addiction to a system which every other democratic nation in Europe considers radically unsound.

The only alternative to that system is citizen training in some form ; and I do not know how our long-range military problem is to be solved, if training of the young in social and military duties is to be permanently ruled out. War and conscription have been coming nearer for the last four years despite our rearmament ; and something more is only too obviously required of us.

War and conscription—the joint abomination which we are all burning to avert ! If we cannot save ourselves from the one, we cannot save ourselves from the other. If citizen training may prove an antidote to both, it is surely worth dispassionate consideration.

From the standpoint of youth, moreover, it is vital to stop, not only the advent of war, but the rate at which we are moving towards serious impoverishment. It will be something to stagger from year to year without a breach of the peace ; but every year which passes without a limitation of armaments will be a blow to the finance of social progress, and even so will not prevent

an ultimate explosion unless the strain of competition is drastically relaxed. We of the older generation do not like paying taxes ; but the burden which now falls on us bears no comparison to the burden which will ultimately fall on youth, if defence expenditure cannot be largely reduced ; for every year the fall in the birth-rate is altering the balance between youth and age, producer and receiver, worker and parasite, to the disadvantage of youth. It is therefore all in youth's interest, for the sake not only of peace but of social advance, to make the maximum effort, short of war itself, to stay the madness of competitive armament and divert to peaceful progress the sinews which are at present being used to undermine and destroy it.

Finally, we have to solve in some way the critical situation caused by the shortage of recruits for the Regular Army. We may palter with that problem for a year or two more, but we shall have no real security until it is satisfactorily settled, and every further year of delay in facing it increases its gravity.

Here, then, are three desiderata of the most important kind—the avoidance of conscription, the reduction of defence expenditure and the solution of our Regular Army problem—all calling urgently for attention. Let us see what citizen service may do for each of them.

The Avoidance of Conscription

As a first step in that enquiry let us once again recapitulate in the briefest manner the purposes for which we have to maintain an Army.

The first is the provision of troops for garrison duty oversea, since military strength in some form is indispensable to the security of our naval and air bases and to our responsibilities in the East and Middle East. These garrisons have to be kept up to strength, and they need for reinforcement in case of emergency a small strategic reserve ready for service in very varied conditions as an expeditionary force.

Neither Territorials nor militia of any sort can be used for this purpose, which entails a considerable spell of service oversea, and we have therefore always entrusted it to a small professional standing Army with its own Reserve. The Cardwell system of linked battalions has for over sixty years supplied us with all three requirements—oversea garrisons, expeditionary force and reserve; but that system is now under considerable strain.

India has hitherto borne a large share of its cost, and it is certain that the Indian taxpayer's burden in that respect will have to be reduced. The cost to our own Army Estimates has, moreover, been mitigated by using home battalions for the whole training of recruits. That method is not satisfactory because it means that the home battalions, which constitute our strategic reserve, consist too largely of half-trained troops, and are constantly being depleted by the demand of the oversea battalions for drafts.

The British Army in India is not fully up to strength, and there are still greater deficiencies in the rest of our oversea garrisons. To reinforce the latter with the requisite drafts and at the same time bring our home units up to strength would exhaust a considerable part

of our Army Reserve. If, therefore, we had to maintain an expeditionary force in the field for more than a few weeks, we should have to call upon the Territorial Army for the supply of drafts.

That is not the function of the Territorial Army, and it would be against the undertakings which we have given to it. The proper function of the Territorials is to provide us with our other outstanding military requirement—a Second Line for home defence ; and they should not be liable to decimation as drafts for the Regular Army, if they are to serve as an efficient Second Line with distinctive functions of their own.

It is therefore one of the essentials of military reform to bring the Regular Army and Reserve up to the necessary strength, whatever that may prove to be when we have thoroughly reviewed our requirements in the form of oversea garrisons and expeditionary force, with the Regular Reserve required for both purposes. The other is to provide for home defence without calling upon the Regular Army. The two branches of our military organization, Regular and Territorial, should, in fact, be independent of each other in the sense that each should be free and competent to discharge its own functions. If that is to be achieved, the Regular Army must have no liabilities for home defence, and the Territorials must be freed from their present liability of serving as promiscuous reinforcements to the Regular Army.

I am convinced that conscription on the continental model is not the solution of this two-fold problem that we require. It would not be suitable for our Regular Army, and it would give us a much larger Second Line than our conditions necessitate.

The Army we need as an Imperial garrison and reserve cannot possibly be formed out of annual classes of short-service recruits. The length of service that accords best with its complex requirements is open to argument, but it must in any event be longer than any period of compulsory service established amongst Continental Powers. Britain is an oceanic Power, and the organization of her standing Army must be governed by that fact. Its strength need not be great as measured by continental scales, but it must be ready at all times with adequate reinforcements and reserves. For a standing Army of that kind voluntary recruitment is the only possible system; its character is incompatible with compulsory service.

As to our Second Line, this country is not, in my opinion, called upon to maintain in peace time a national army ready for immediate intervention in a European war. It is true that another effort such as we put forth in 1914-18 may be required of us—will indeed certainly be required of us—if we are committed to another European war; for history shows only too clearly that wars on that scale are fought to the last ditch. But that is no adequate reason for conscription in this country on the French or German scale in time of peace.

Our Second Line should, as it seems to me, be organized for two purposes, primary and secondary. The primary purpose should be home defence, and the standard in that should be instant readiness for all the duties involved. The secondary purpose should be to establish the framework of military expansion on a national scale, in case that necessity be forced upon us by war itself. On this basis the Territorial Army should

be up to full establishment and adequately trained for its primary function of home defence in advance of war. For the secondary purpose we need only have the machinery of expansion ready to our hands in case it is required. To be known to have it ready will immensely reduce the chance of its being required.

With this double purpose in view my suggestion is that all our young men, without distinction of wealth or class, should undergo a period of three months' training in camp between the ages of 18 and 21—that is, before they obtain the vote and become full-fledged citizens. For the great majority the training in these camps should be non-military in character. Only those who volunteered for military training should receive it; and even of those only that percentage should be taken which was necessary to maintain the Territorial Army at full establishment for its primary duty of home defence. On the present Territorial establishment one seventh of the annual total entering camp would be sufficient. The physical and educational standard imposed ought, therefore, to be a high one.

My submission is that the annual intake of 50,000 volunteers selected in this manner and trained on the Swiss militia system would give us a more efficient Second Line than we possess at the present moment; that it would impose a lighter burden upon industry than the present system of Territorial recruiting; that it would immensely facilitate recruiting for the Regular Army; and that it would enable us to keep our Army Estimates within such modest limits as are plainly not to be hoped for on the present basis.

If all this can be done without compulsory military

service, the possibility surely deserves dispassionate investigation. To have genuine military efficiency without compulsion of any sort would be a triumph for British democracy, and I feel convinced that it would do more than millions of expenditure to strengthen our influence for liberty and peace in Europe.

The Reduction of Cost

I also believe that the system proposed would reduce the cost of military efficiency both for industry and the State.

Our present system of recruiting for the Territorial Army is causing a steady increase of interference with industry, and spreads the burden most unfairly. Employers are exhorted to facilitate recruiting and are pilloried if they fail to do so. But while big firms can provide to some extent for an annual exodus of a large percentage of employés without serious loss or inconvenience, small firms are not in that position and may suffer quite disproportionately.

In many cases, moreover, the dates chosen for Territorial camps are extremely embarrassing. There have, for instance, been many complaints from banks and from the businesses which employ the greatest number of "black-coated" workers. These are, for the most part, the more highly educated of the recruits available for Territorial service, and they themselves gain more from an open-air fortnight in camp than many other types of worker.

The Government's appeals are, moreover, putting

an increasing financial burden upon business and industry. Firms are exhorted to allow their workers to be absent for a fortnight on Territorial training without loss of pay, and this demand has two unhappy tendencies. In the first place, it is bound to limit the percentage of employes which firms can afford to release for Territorial service ; and in the second place it must unquestionably interfere with the very desirable movement for annual holidays with pay. A fortnight's absence on full pay represents in itself a considerable charge on industry ; a months' absence on the same terms is more than many firms can possibly contemplate.

Industry is in any case carrying a heavy burden for defence and the social services ; and all these extra demands must tend to reduce its competitive power and to impair its profit-earning capacity—a process which reacts in due course both on wages and on the yield of taxation.

It would be infinitely better and fairer for industry that Territorial recruits should take a longer period of training in social or military service at the comparatively early age of 18 or 19, and that they should thenceforward be free from State demands for service except for some modicum of refresher practice in leisure periods such as week-ends and a few days' refresher camp every second year until they became reservists. That is the practice in Switzerland.

In that free Republic the initial period of military training is 65 days for infantry, taken at the age of 20. As the physical standard for recruits is very high, only 52 per cent of the available class are chosen. The infantry militia-man thereafter takes a refresher course

of 11 days every alternate year until the age of 32, when he passes from the "Elite" to the "Landwehr." He takes one final course of 11 days as a reservist, and then, in his forty-first year, joins the "Landsturm," or Second Reserve, which includes the whole body of citizens from 17 to 48 years of age exclusive of the "Elite" and the "Landwehr."

So far as industry is concerned, the system involves no interference except that it takes employés for a total of 66 days training in alternate years between 21 and 32. In the same period a Territorial in this country would be called upon for 14 days annually—a total of 168 days lost to industry. In the next period, 32 to 40, a Swiss militiaman gives 11 days, the Territorial 112 days. In the whole period from 21 to 40 therefore our Territorials are called upon for 280 days' service, whereas the Swiss militiaman, after his initial three months' training at 20, gives 77 days.

The Swiss system, in fact, involves little more than a quarter of the interference with industry which ours necessitates. The Territorial establishment in this country being at present in round numbers 200,000, the total cost of it in days lost to labour—assuming that it is up to strength and fully trained—amounts in twenty years to 56,000,000. The Swiss system, apart from the three months' initial training, involves a loss of only 15,400,000 days for the maintenance of equal military strength over the same period.

If the 56,000,000 days required by our system are to be taken on full pay and added to a fortnight's holiday, also on full pay, they must considerably increase the cost of production, reduce our competitive power propor-

tionately and aggravate the burden of defence expenditure with a large, though invisible, supplement.

The Swiss have lately been reconsidering both the strength and the training of their army, and they may make considerable changes in both. But they are unlikely to abandon the main principle of their system, which lies in the length and thoroughness of the initial training. This enables them to keep their militia up to the mark with biennial refresher courses and thus to put less strain upon industry than we do with the annual camps which are the main basis of our Territorial system.

It is, I think, demonstrable that under a system of citizen training on the Swiss principle carefully adapted to our own conditions we could not only reduce very largely the burden upon industry of our present Territorial system but also make it lighter than the burden of the Swiss militia upon Swiss industry. We should, for instance, certainly not need so large a proportion as 50 per cent. of the annual class of young men reaching the age of 18, and we might considerably reduce the period required in Switzerland for "Elite" service.

The larger the annual entry, the shorter, of course, the period of service required of it. If the Territorial establishment which we require is roughly 200,000, it could be kept up to strength by annual contingents of 50,000 with a liability for active service of four years. Given three months' initial training, the days required for refresher training in alternate years on the Swiss system would then be 22 per man, or a total of 4,400,000 spread over four years.

This method would take 100,000 men out of industry annually for a period of 11 days—that is 1,100,000

man-days. Our present method in full working must take 200,000 men annually for a period of 14 days—that is 2,800,000 man-days. Apart, therefore, from the gain to national production, the Swiss system would mean the saving of something in the neighbourhood of a million sterling annually in unproductive wages.

These considerations are as important to Labour as to Capital, and it is remarkable that more attention has not been paid to them.

I would add, in this context, one further consideration. The Regular Army is enormously expensive to maintain, and its duties should be reduced to the smallest compass possible in order that its establishment may be proportionately low. It is true that Mr. Hore-Belisha has said that the Regular Army is responsible in the first place for home defence ; but there is in reality no case whatever for using expensive professional troops in that way. Switzerland is well defended and her army is also well equipped ; but the cost of it is not a tenth per head of the cost of Regular soldiers here.

The prospective burden of national defence is surely grave enough already ; and every shilling spent on it must be taken from the development of industry or of the social services. It is sheer madness in the present state of taxation and national finance to spend money on raising and training Regular troops for duties which a Territorial with less than a tithe of the training and at less than a tithe of the expense could perform with adequate efficiency.

It may indeed be pointed out that training on the Swiss model would not provide for adequate efficiency in the Territorial anti-aircraft units. I agree ; but our

normal Territorial system is equally unsuitable, and the employment of Regular troops, as I have just pointed out, is undesirable on grounds of cost.

The practical solution, to my mind, is to recruit for the Territorial anti-aircraft units on a different basis from either the Regular Army or the Second Line. In anti-aircraft units a quick turn-over of personnel is not desirable. Every battery or searchlight unit should, I suggest, be maintained on a long-service militia basis with an establishment permitting on active service of two reliefs—that is, three shifts—in every twenty-four hours. On this basis men could serve to a comparatively advanced age, and could very well be entered now at an age much in advance of the Territorial standard.

There must be multitudes of ex-Service men, ex-gunners in particular, fit enough and well qualified for this type of service who think very reasonably that the Territorial Army is a job for younger men but who would come forward readily for anti-aircraft units and remain attached to them, after their initial training, for some small retaining pay. This intermediate form of service would cost more than the Second Line, which should not be paid at all, but very much less than Regular service, which should be confined to its proper function of providing the necessary oversea garrisons and a small strategic reserve.

Military Efficiency

Finally, we must really face the fact that our present military system is not giving us either the Regular Army

or the Second Line which we require. The Regular Army is unpopular with the people, the Territorial Army with industry; and there is no way but that of citizen training to put the matter right.

It is true that the Territorials are now very nearly up to strength, thanks to an appeal to the patriotism of both employers and employées assisted by much advertisement of our weakness. But this we cannot repeat year by year with any semblance of national dignity nor without a lowering of our prestige in other countries.

It must, moreover, be recognized that the recruiting figures have been swelled by enrolling a considerable proportion of men who will not be free for Territorial service in case of war because they will be needed at their peace-time work. The facts in this regard are serious, and the Territorial units should be purged at once of all but those who can be counted upon when mobilization for active service is required.

Clearly, too, we shall have to provide for a considerable increase of the present establishments. The anti-aircraft units must, for instance, be continuously in action day and night if they are to discharge their task, and their establishment should in consequence make possible a regular system of watches and reliefs.

We cannot, moreover, go much further in converting Territorial divisions and battalions into anti-aircraft units without destroying the efficiency for its own duties of the rest of the Territorial Force. Fourteen divisions were not too many; but they were reduced to twelve when the first anti-aircraft units were formed, and they are now being still further contracted. Recruiting for the anti-aircraft units is no doubt easier, but we cannot

afford to be left without a Territorial organization on the old scale at the very least, if not upon a larger one, as our Second Line of defence.

Recruiting on the present system will therefore present increasing difficulties. As it stands, the system is fundamentally unfair; and that is bound to tell against it, as the effect of the present campaign wears off and those who have responded to it begin to realize the inequality of its incidence.

It is not just that a small proportion of our able-bodied manhood should give ten years or more of its working life to Territorial service while the vast majority do absolutely nothing. The whole system is wrong; and because it is wrong, it only works under some sense of emergency. That is a precarious basis, which commits us to the necessity of constantly proclaiming the imminence of war and making war more likely by that very process.

It is true that even under the Swiss militia system we should not require more than a small proportion of our young manhood for military training. If 200,000 be our proper Territorial establishment, we should need but 50,000 a year with four years' on the active list; and that would represent but a seventh of the young men annually reaching manhood, which is about 350,000. But those who do not undertake military training should not, in fairness, be exempt from a similar period of camp training in social service, A.R.P. and out-door activities.

There would then be no unfairness except in one respect—namely, that those who undertook military training would be liable for attendance at two "refresher" camps during their subsequent four years

of Territorial service. They themselves, however, would not resent that further liability so long as it involved no handicap to them in their professions or employments ; and employers might well be called upon to guarantee them against that, since the liability would be much less onerous than that which we are now pressing upon industry.

The demand for a fortnight's leave with pay for the purpose of Territorial training I have already shown to be extremely burdensome ; and employers will certainly not accede to it indefinitely without constant protest and recrimination. Many will, indeed, not be able to do so, and recruiting for the Territorial Army will therefore always be attended by public appeals to an apparently defective patriotism, public denunciation of recalcitrant employers and all the accompanying suggestion of national disunity and indifference which harms us so profoundly in the eyes of Europe.

Some better system is really indispensable if we are to maintain an adequate Second Line with fairness to all and without an annual advertisement of national shortcomings which puts us in a misleading light, plays constantly upon the fear of war, and involves us in needless scares and detestable humiliation.

Some radical change of system is even more imperative from the standpoint of the Regular Army. The duties of that Army, which must include some period of service oversea, make compulsory recruiting for it impossible ; but the present shortage of recruits must be remedied, and it is difficult to see how that can be done, even at crippling expense, unless the country as a whole adopts a different attitude towards it.

The present improvement in recruiting is largely fictitious and will soon confront the country with a situation which must be drastically handled. The cost of the Army is rising out of all proportion to the results secured, and is bound to rise still more steeply when India's share in the present expenditure is reduced, as it inevitably will be. I am personally convinced that the present Regular establishment could be reduced without prejudice to the discharge of the Army's oversea liabilities if there stood behind it an adequate Second Line with sound militia training which could be rapidly expanded in emergency. I am also convinced that the introduction of camp training for all young men on the threshold of manhood would change the attitude of many thousands of them towards the military life and transform the conditions of recruiting. But without that change the Army question will remain insoluble.

Democratization of the Regular Army is highly desirable, as the Opposition very rightly contend; that Army will never have the country with it until democratization is a reality. But how can democratization be achieved unless the Regular Army becomes the offshoot of a citizen militia recruited and officered on a truly democratic basis? Every young man aspiring to commissioned rank in the Regular Army should begin by serving his time as a private in the citizen militia, where he would rub shoulders with a microcosm of the nation and shed the self-importance with which wealth or station or up-bringing may have loaded him.

In the Swiss militia promotion is entirely through the ranks; no one can rise to non-commissioned or commissioned rank who has not first served as a private

soldier, and promotion is strictly by merit. Promotion cannot be refused; but since officers and N.C.O.'s have to give more time to military service, account is taken of their private circumstances and professions. That the system is democratic I can quote an old Labour member of our own Parliament to show. This is what Mr. Seddon said in 1909 of a visit to Switzerland:—

“In visiting a continental country where they have a citizen army, what struck me most was the fact that many of the officers who were at the manœuvres were the servants of the soldiers who were there as well. I had one concrete case where a major in the Swiss Army was giving orders to a non-commissioned officer, and it turned out that the major was a commissionaire at the bank and the non-commissioned officer was the manager of the bank.”¹

I have indeed no doubt that if our Regular Army were based upon a really democratic Second Line through which all ranks of it would pass before becoming soldiers by profession, we could extend enormously the field from which our officers are drawn.

Our whole object is to provide for such military efficiency in this country as will enable it to play its part decisively on the side of peace. War would involve us in universal conscription, and those two dread necessities, war and conscription, are what we seek above all things to avoid. We need not, in order to play our part for liberty and peace, maintain in Britain in peace-time the huge standing armies which all other States in the danger

¹ Hansard, March 4th, 1909, p. 1654.

zone, democratic or totalitarian, find indispensable. But we must show that in case of need Britain has ready in spirit and in form the organization necessary to put a national army in the field without the long delay of nearly two years which cost our allies and ourselves so much in the last war.

Scares, drum-beating, advertisement are signs of weakness and inefficiency which reduce our standing and spread doubts of our value as allies. "Such things would not be necessary," all other countries conclude, "if the spirit of the country were sound." A minimum of real military efficiency, based on citizen training of some kind, would therefore be of more value to the cause of liberty and peace than any conceivable expansion of our armaments on purely professional lines, since it would present us to the world as a nation ready, like other nations, as a single whole for any emergency that may arise.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CASE FOR CITIZEN TRAINING—II

I HAVE given the military and material arguments for citizen service ; but they would never convince our people, if they stood alone. To take the step required they must realize that the issue is in essence a moral one, and that by taking it they will raise the cause of freedom in stature and strength, not only in this country but throughout the world.

We are rightly determined not to be militarized ; neither the goosetep nor the *passo Romano* will ever be acclimatized on British soil ; and masses of our people are firmly convinced that military efficiency cannot be achieved without some dangerous surrender to Nazi or Fascist ideas. It must therefore be shown that citizen training is neither militarist in design nor yet intended to promote the domination of a class with narrow imperialist conceptions of British interests and aims.

The parties will never combine to bring it in until they are jointly persuaded that it is truly democratic in character and necessary to advance, not merely British interests, but Britain's role as a protagonist of liberty in international affairs. Failing conviction on both those points, many might freely admit that citizen training would stimulate recruitment for the Army and strengthen our home defence against overhead attack, but nevertheless maintain that it is incompatible with our national ways and ideals.

The moral arguments must therefore be the decisive ones. No reasonable person will deny that, other things being equal, some training in duty to the commonwealth is salutary for the young, nor yet that the strengthening of national comradeship without distinction of class or wealth is much to be desired, nor finally that both those factors would fortify the country for the guardianship of liberty at a very critical time. The question is whether other things are really equal, and whether a freedom so reinforced would not in the outcome be a freedom compromised.

To deal with this great issue we had better first consider what citizen training involves. For my part, I should regard it as the crown of our educational system, a finishing period of open-air training such as the American Government has already instituted in its Civilian Conservation Corps, which works under discipline but not on military lines. Here is a thumb-nail outline of what such training might be. Its military aspect would be a by-product, though of sterling value. The greater argument lies in its moral significance.

Fitness, Discipline, and Comradeship

The number of our boys who will enter manhood annually for the next few years is about 350,000. That is not an unmanageable figure, and it should not overstrain our resources to find the necessary training-staff and accommodation by dividing it into two and giving each half a period of three months' training during the summer. The German Labour camps give a six months'

training, working throughout the year, summer and winter; and this may prove the better method for us also when we have suitable accommodation. But winter quarters must, of necessity, be more elaborate and expensive, and we may very well find a training of three months sufficient for our purposes. From the duty of citizen training for that period there should be no exemptions whatever except for those who join the Fighting Services and for those disqualified by some disabling weakness or defect.

The camps or training-centres should all be in the country. No special camps for special classes; the same quarters, rations and discipline for everyone, and also the same (extremely modest) allowance of pocket-money. This should be paid by the State, no additions by parents permitted. Young men should be free to take their training at any period most convenient to themselves from eighteen to twenty.

An admirable example of the organization required is to be found in the Civilian Conservation Corps founded by President Roosevelt in the United States. That is well over 300,000 strong, and it works in companies of 200 officered by a captain and two lieutenants from the Army Reserve. The discipline is strict, but not military in character. Non-commissioned officers are appointed from the ranks; they are known as leaders and sub-leaders, and carry out the duties for which N.C.O.'s are normally responsible in military life.

A wide range of work is undertaken by the Corps. It includes "the building of dams, roads and trails, conservation work and reafforestation in the national parks, and any other useful work which does not cut

across the ordinary run of commercial enterprise.”¹ In this country farm-training should, I think, be added for those who have an inclination that way. The value of the labours of the American Corps is put already at £200,000,000.²

The men work for six hours a day, and can in their leisure pursue their education in many useful directions under the guidance of the Army Education Department. When first proposed, the camps were denounced as militarist and undemocratic in principle; but they are now one of the most popular features of President Roosevelt’s New Deal.

What we need above all in this country is a mixing period for every class of youth and every variety of opinion. That is not a salient need in the United States or in the British Dominions; but here the value of it would be profound, and it is one of the main reasons for which citizen training should in our case be universal, embracing all our youth on the threshold of man’s estate.

The key to the whole training should be comradeship transcending all this country’s far too numerous class distinctions. Many young correspondents have written to me on this subject. Some are obviously Socialists by opinion, while others are Conservatives of equal conviction; and the latter insist on it quite as vehemently as the former. History may well decide that Lord Baldwin’s greatest service to his countrymen was in this aspect of their life. He set himself, heart and soul, to prevent the demon of class-warfare from bedevilling our politics, and he exorcised it with marked success.

¹ *Youth the Creditor*, by A. J. Douglas Cameron, M.B. Ch.B., p. 67.

² *Manchester Guardian*, May 13th, 1938.

But class-feeling in subtler forms still permeates the country, and it is worse in England than in Scotland, Ireland or Wales. The servant trouble, for instance, would be much less formidable if, in the hierarchy of many households, great and small, a silly snobbishness played less part. We can change this, and we must. The generation which served in the field during the Great War knows what an inspiring thing comradeship can be among all ranks of the King's subjects; and that comradeship still lives in far the greater number of our ex-Service associations. Can we not recover in peace what we found so easily in war? The Dominions have it, and it has always been a signal feature of working-class life throughout this country; but it does not flourish in what we are accustomed to call our "middle classes."

The general purpose of the camps should be to develop fitness, discipline, and good fellowship; the further special aim should be some training for corporate action in all the forms required to make our civil population as immune as possible from the horrors of air bombardment. A wide range of service is necessary for that, quite apart from the military duties of the Army and Air Force, and women will be needed as well as men; but the duties calling for disciplined personnel in the largest numbers will be those of the auxiliary police and fire brigades, which are suitable only for men. Such service is social, not military; but it is vital to security and will do much to convince any possible aggressor that a sudden military challenge to this country is unlikely to pay.

Air-raid services in our great cities seem likely to

involve a very large percentage of the adult population not otherwise engaged. If the town is a munitions centre, the majority of able-bodied men will presumably be needed for work in the factories, so that the air-raid services will depend upon the remaining adult and able-bodied citizens. Germany, we are told, has now twelve million citizens enrolled for air-raid services, apart from those required for military service, work in the factories, and other war duties. If our trained civilian personnel were to be proportionate to that already trained in Germany we should need eight millions, apart from doctors and other specialists. But the German figure clearly includes all householders, and the actual air-raid services are probably about a million strong. That is the figure at which Sir Samuel Hoare has put our own requirements, and it ought to be steadily maintained.

Air-raid precautions cannot, of course, be entrusted at any time solely to the younger male element in the population; much of that will be needed in essential industries when it has completed its period of national service. But the presence in all our cities of a steadily increasing number of men ready for instructed action and fully trained to air-raid duties as auxiliary police, firemen, gas-men, first-aid men, and all the other necessary services will give increasing confidence to the whole population and greatly simplify the maintenance of the necessary organization at a high standard of efficiency.

This would be citizen service in the truest sense continuing after the preliminary three months' training as cadets. It has been very justly said that ignorance and a feeling of helplessness are the main causes of panic.

To these there can be no surer antidote than the presence everywhere of men knowing what to do and how to do it, and putting their knowledge into action. The strengthening and training of our youth with that essential aim in view may very well determine the history of Europe in the decade immediately ahead.

The Military Side.

I suggested in my last chapter that if citizen training were instituted on broad non-military lines, some proportion of the young men undergoing it should be allowed to volunteer for military training on the Swiss pattern which Australia and New Zealand adopted by inter-party agreement before the last war. This method would give us an efficient Second Line with its own reserve, and it should also be adapted for increasing our reserve of air pilots with a grounding in Air Force technique.

So far as the Territorial Army is concerned, there would be no need for more than a small proportion of the annual class of citizen cadets; but those cadets who preferred military to non-military training should be allowed to opt for it and to do their three months' service in a Territorial camp on condition that they pledged themselves thereafter, if needed, to a period of service in the Territorial Army and Reserve. Territorial recruiting still suffers not unnaturally from the fact that many young men see no reason for joining up when others remain free to do nothing whatever for the State. The removal of that inequality would greatly

increase the number prepared to undertake some military service on voluntary lines.

Recruiting for the Navy needs no stimulus ; our only problem is to train the personnel as fast as we build the ships. The Air Force also has raised all the men it needs ; but many of the artificers and mechanics recruited are no longer young men. The age limits for recruitment have been wide—in most branches from eighteen to thirty-two, in two (Engine Fitters and Electricians) from eighteen to forty-two. The annual rate of entry has been approximately 10,000 men between those ages and 3,000 boys between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, and a much larger intake is now needed to keep pace with the expansion of formations and machines.

The period of regular service varies from six to nine years. It is a splendid training for mechanics of many kinds, and all airmen in the first four groups are eligible for training as pilots provided they are under twenty-five years of age when they begin. Boys entering between fifteen and seventeen, and young men entering when they attain their nineteenth year would be exempt as regulars from citizen training in the other non-military form ; but there should also, I suggest, be exemption for any who entered the Auxiliary Air Force, and undertook to do for a certain number of years the training and service which it requires. This service should be free of cost to all entrants, so that none could denounce the Auxiliary Air Force, and the exemption from citizen training which it conferred as a rich man's preserve. It is only right that those who undertake this longer and more exacting form of service on the country's behalf should be free from the other form, provided

it is open on the same terms to all who volunteer for it and have the qualifications required.

The system of citizen training here proposed would thus provide for the steady reinforcement of three essential services as the older personnel falls out, and it would enable us to dispense with the annual recruiting campaigns which must otherwise be necessary, despite the atmosphere of scare which they spread at home and the bad impression they create abroad. It would also, I believe, do so much to bring the Regular Army into closer touch with national life that it would solve the problems of democratization and recruitment which are forcing themselves to the front.

The Jaurès ideal of military organization, derived as it was from Switzerland, is the only way by which a nation can achieve on democratic principles the military efficiency which the defence of peace and the service of liberty require. In our case we need a small professional Army for purposes which no militia can serve; but that Army should be an off-shoot of the militia, officered by men who have passed through the militia ranks and rubbed shoulders with all types of their fellow-countrymen.

One other point requires emphasis. There is no ground whatever for the fear that a national militia such as is here proposed could be used for intervention in industrial disputes. The mobilization of the Territorials as blacklegs in a strike is already forbidden by law, and the same provision should be enacted for any new services based on citizen training, such as A.R.P. police. But the more democratic our Services, the less the prospect that any Government would seek to use them in

that way. Jaurès said very truly that when the Army is part of the nation, it can never be what professional Armies have often been—an instrument of repression in the hands of the civil power.

“Non Sine Pulvere.”

Can anyone seriously maintain that citizen training in this form would compromise rather than strengthen our hold on freedom, weaken rather than reinforce our national morale? None, I am sure, who looks at this country as it is and compares it with the other European democracies, whose cause and its own are one. We are still insular in mind, despite the loss of our age-long immunity from attacks on our own soil; and the habit of almost effortless authority is ingrained in us as a nation because for generations it has been the easy corollary of pre-eminent sea-power. How much longer is that habit to endure?

We can no longer maintain our insular freedom, much less our claim to moral authority in international affairs, upon the old, easy terms. The changes wrought in the balance of Europe by the last five years cannot be corrected by any rearmament of which we are capable, great as is our financial and manufacturing power. Everything we have at heart, therefore, now depends upon our making a moral effort comparable in character, if not in scale, to that which we made in the last war.

It is not our ships or our guns or our aeroplanes that are being weighed by foreign nations so much as the temper of our people and the spirit of our youth. On that estimate depends the authority or influence which

we can exert, because it is now the decisive measure of our capacity for war. Palmerstonian rhodomontade was cheap and easy when overwhelming sea-power gave us a ubiquitous authority that none could gainsay. But now air-power is almost as ubiquitous as sea-power, and it can strike at whole countries where sea-power only touched the fringe. We are now, therefore, a continental nation ; and whether we ourselves recognize it or not, the power behind our authority as protagonists of freedom will be measured in continental scales.

Nothing can be done to save freedom in Europe by those whose only care is lest their own freedom should be impaired. That is not the spirit in which to prove that democracy commands a devotion equal and indeed superior to that evinced by the subjects of totalitarian States. The British passion for freedom has now once again to measure itself with the German passion for subordination to a cause. It is not the object of the two passions which will decide between them, but the quality of the devotion which they respectively inspire.

My argument is, therefore, not built solely on the negative ground that freedom will not be impaired by training for service in its cause. It is built upon the positive ground that by such training the strength, security and value of freedom will be powerfully enlarged. We have to keep a balance of European forces in which British will not be out-matched by German ideals. That is not a selfish cause ; it includes the freedom of others as well as our own ; and many of us are constantly proclaiming it as a principle which British policy should at all costs observe.

But principles are not to be vindicated by speech and fervour alone. No man who fears to lay down his own life can save the life of a friend. Service involves some sacrifice, and the service of freedom is not exempt from that universal rule. If training to defend our freedom and that of others is incompatible with freedom, then indeed freedom is doomed.

We admit the truth of that, in effect, when we declare that we will consent to be trained for service in the event of war. But why should war exalt us to a virtue which our love of peace is too weak to inspire? And if a given course be wrong in peace, how can it be right in war? There is something almost insensate in our refusal to give a smaller meed of service in peace and for peace than we should face with eagerness in war.

The reason, however, is plain. Deep within us there still lurks the idea that war is a match between trained professional teams played out on some one else's ground. We cannot bring ourselves to grasp that now the whole nation is the team, and that our strength for peace and liberty will therefore be measured by our quality and training as a nation, however efficient the professional forces which our wealth enables us to maintain. But we must accept that lesson, if we want to protect ourselves and liberty from the ruin wrought by war.

I say, then, that the training here proposed will enlarge the value of the freedom which this country confers upon its own by adding the ideal of service to the rights and privileges which they will enjoy. There need be no more militarism in that service than there is militarism in the discipline of an Oxford eight; for we can make

the quality and character of our citizen training as British as the ideals which it will serve. Let no one doubt the added strength which it will give to our own freedom, or the part which it will play in fortifying freedom throughout the world.

"I cannot," said our greatest poet but one, "praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." It has never been enough for virtue, in our British eyes, that a man should keep himself unspotted from the world by shunning it. We are, as Lord Rosebery once said, a race of practical mystics, and we have spread across the world driven not only by desire for gain but by a sense of mission in serving other sections of humanity.

A fugitive and cloister'd freedom was long our privilege, though we have owed it again and again to men who put the service of freedom above its enjoyment. But any further dalliance with the idea that freedom can be enjoyed without some service to it will destroy it altogether. Freedom will not dwell amongst us long unless we teach our youth to realize that for her breathing as for ours the air must have two elements—not only the oxygen of rights, but the hydrogen of obligations.

In Hoc Signo.

Service she must have, and training for service to ensure its efficiency. Whether we are conscious of the

fact or not, that is the only sign which will convince all other nations that Britain can still uphold the causes to which she is wedded despite the weakening of her traditional security by the menace of the air.

Look back, if you doubt it, at the other European democracies—apart, if you like, from France and her military allies. From Scandinavia to Switzerland they demand a period of service to the State from all young men. In war the service prescribed by law is universal and unlimited. In peace time it is whatever the State requires ; the period of training with the Colours is in some cases six months, in none more than a year. The strength thus given to the State is not a preparation for war, though,—as Belgium showed in 1914—the greatest Powers cannot with impunity ignore it altogether. Far greater than any military worth which it may possess is the recognition which it entails that some duty and service are due from youth to the State which gives it everything. Without some practical acceptance of that principle in this country we cannot make good our principles in the government of the world.

For it is only through the strength of its own State that youth can hope to put its stamp upon the history of its times. Humanitarian aspirations must work through some effective medium, and there is no such medium but the State, whether you conceive of it in isolation or in alliance with other States or as a State member of the League. If our Governments, whatever their political colour, cannot draw service, strength and inspiration from every succeeding wave of youth which passes from adolescence into citizenship with all its privileges and powers, they will not stand effectively

for law or liberty or peace or even for the security of our homes.

It cannot, I repeat, lie beyond us to forge such a bond between our commonwealth and our youth without militarising them both. Citizen service can be rendered in many forms. The form is not of primary importance, and there is no need in this country to make a universal duty of military training without regard to individual faith and feeling. Apply it as you will, it is the principle that counts. The ultimate test of every system of democratic government—I repeat it unashamedly, because history proves its truth—is the relation which it teaches between the individual and the commonwealth. Therein lies the case for the institution in all democracies of some period of citizen training. The other European democracies are ahead of us without exception in associating duty with freedom, service with privilege; and we are, at last, beginning to ask ourselves whether we or they are the truer idealists.

Let us ask it to some purpose, and forgo at last our bemusement with exhortations and warnings that are as empty as those which denied our children education for many irreparable years. In the fourth chapter of his essay *On Liberty* John Stuart Mill declares that every individual is bound to bear his share of “the labours and sacrifices incurred for defending the society or its members from injury or molestation.” This duty, he adds, “society is justified in enforcing at all costs on those who endeavour to withhold fulfilment.” That is the doctrine of *On Liberty*, and it applies to molestation and injury not only of our own society but of democratic society throughout the world.

Wise old Thomas à Kempis had a word of advice for individuals which nations cannot afford to neglect. "The highest and most profitable reading is the true knowledge and despising of ourselves. . . . Who hath a stouter combat than he that laboureth to overcome himself? This ought to be our concern, to conquer ourselves and daily to wax stronger."

Stronger indeed—but not for our own benefit alone. Citizen training is necessary in Britain, not merely for her own safety, but for the upholding of all that she stands for in the progress of humankind. None, therefore, should be averse to it or exempt from it.

Many young men may feel with deep conviction that they would rather train for saving and enriching than for taking life, and I can see no lack of civic spirit in that. But military service is social service, too, and it may call for greater sacrifice. Let, then, the choice between military and non-military service be absolutely free, so long as some form of social service is rendered on the threshold of manhood by the whole of British youth. Is it beyond hope that Parliament should adopt as an all-party measure this reinforcement of our democratic ideals?

CHAPTER XV

TRUTH, THE GREAT AWAKENER

BRITAIN is, I am convinced, on the eve of a great awakening. She has already shed, in most respects, the lingering tradition of Victorian *laissez-faire*. In education, in health and in all the social services she has made enormous strides. The duty of wealth to the country is now universally acknowledged, and it is constantly being enlarged. We also know too well that, in case of war, service to the country would be imposed on all who are fit to render it, rich or poor. It only needs a much less exacting but immediate acknowledgement of duty to liberty and peace to save both those causes in Europe and banish the awful shadow which now darkens the firmament.

We have seen that the argument for citizen training as a necessary condition of safety against forces transported by sea failed, even with Lord Roberts's advocacy, to convince the Government's chief advisers before the war. What history, however, now makes plain is that while the Government of the day were technically justified in their assertion that the Navy would hold the seas, they were utterly and catastrophically wrong in their further contention that citizen training would be an impediment to military efficiency and would not help to keep the peace.

The adoption of citizen training by Britain before 1914 might very well have altered fundamentally the

complex of causes which caused the war. If it had, a million British lives would have been saved and the chaos through which the world has been staggering ever since would never have occurred. But even if it had not entirely averted the war, it would unquestionably have shortened it and more than halved the sacrifice of which our best and also our poorest have borne the greater share.

If that was true in 1914, it is much truer now.

The Strength of British Liberty

We cannot pretend to ourselves that the liberty which we enjoy has not been won for us by citizen service over and over again. England's militia system was the root of her strength for hundreds of years. It was, for instance, the basis of the Parliamentary armies which carried the cause of the Commons to victory in the Great Rebellion; Cromwell's New Model was raised, as to half at least, by compulsion in 1645. We had fallen by comparison in the Napoleonic wars when the press-gang came in; but that monstrous system gave us the men who saved our cause at Trafalgar and Waterloo. Compulsion once again proved necessary in the last great war, not because our spirit was weak but because the strength of a many-sided nation cannot be fairly and impartially organized by any other means.

It is wounding to our sense of justice to remember that Regular soldiers were compelled by law to serve beyond their contract for the duration of the war long before compulsion was applied to their fellow-subjects.

It is also terrible to reflect that the better part of our trained officers, N.C.O.'s and men were wastefully sacrificed at the front in the first months of war because no system existed whereby their skilled capacity could be used for forming and training the national forces in slow preparation behind. I frankly believe that nearly all the prejudice against the Regular soldier which the men of Kitchener's armies have harboured since the war was due to the fact that they were entrusted so largely to the leadership of officers much below the Regular Army's average of sense, capacity and fitness for command.

All this injustice, waste and confusion we are to face again because we will not take the one step which will show our readiness in advance and thereby reduce immeasurably the danger of war. How often has the cry of "freedom in jeopardy" been raised when some measure was proposed to make freedom more secure!

Sir Robert Peel's constables were denounced as a menace to liberty, an innovation designed to Prussianize the spirit of the land. Pillars of the constitution we consider them now, popular with all classes (except motorists), kindly servants of the nation to whose courtesy all other nations testify.

Compulsory education was fought on the same lines for a generation and more. Sir Edward Baines, the Liberal member for Bradford, gained on that subject a widespread popularity for defending both teachers and children against enslavement to the State. "The character of the Englishman," he said truly, "will depend on the training of the English children." But alas for the moral that he drew!

“Is any man so besotted as to think that you can make the schoolmaster a slave and yet a trainer of freedom? . . . Nay, the proposed system would train the very children from their earliest entrance into school to obsequious servility . . . The very babe would become venal—the very boy a parasite!”

The bare idea of compulsory education seemed to him incompatible with the British character:—

“If every other argument failed, I would confidently rely on this alone, namely, the proud consciousness which swells the breast of the freeman and gives him a moral dignity beyond all that the schools can teach.”

How many millions of Englishmen have since developed a wider moral consciousness as freemen from the teaching of the schools!

It is astonishing to reflect that arguments of the Baines variety delayed the establishment of compulsory education in England long after it had manifestly transformed the quality of the Scottish race. We would no more look at Scotland's example then than we will look at Switzerland's or Scandinavia's to-day, and a whole generation of English children suffered heavily in consequence.

In the very last ditch, on April 18th, 1847, when the Government finally introduced a vote of £100,000—£100,000!—for “the education of the people,” Mr. Duncombe, the Liberal member for Finsbury, moved a blocking amendment in favour of an enquiry on the

ground that the introduction of compulsion might "increase the influence of the Crown, invade the constitutional functions of Parliament, and interfere with the religious convictions and civil rights of His Majesty's subjects." Macaulay's reply is a classic. I will quote but one sentence :—

"He is, I must say, but a short-sighted friend of the common people who is eager to bestow on them a franchise which would make them all-powerful, and yet withhold from them that instruction without which their power must be a curse to themselves and the State."

The resolution was defeated by 372 votes to 47, and no one has suggested since that time that Parliament's decision has done anything to impair "the proud consciousness which swells the breast of a freeman."

Yet, whenever any salutary reform of a large order is proposed in this country, the cry is infallibly raised that it will undermine the independence of the Briton and threaten freedom in its inmost sanctuary. It was so with the social services; their earlier protagonists such as Joseph Chamberlain and David Lloyd George always had to resist the accusation that they were laying profane hands upon something sacred in the life and ways of the country. It was so with tariff reform, of which we were told, when all the economic arguments had been exhausted, that it would prostitute Parliament and so seam our political life with secret corruption, that the House of Commons would no longer stand

with freedom and disinterestedness for the welfare of the common people.

These sinister prognostications are invariably confounded, because freedom in this country is a hardier growth than many of its short-sighted defenders appear to believe ; but there is everything in the world to be said for guarding it with sleepless jealousy so long as we do not actually endanger it, like spoiling parents, by overweening solicitude. Spoiling is often a greater danger than discipline, but indulgent parents will seldom believe it. So we are now once again being told that to crown our compulsory educational system with a short period of compulsory training in practical citizenship will destroy the very Ark of the Covenant.

The head teachers of West Lothian have certainly shown that our educational system has not as yet done all it might to foster a proud consciousness of their citizenship in the breasts of our rising freemen ; but the Baines-Duncombe complex still keeps us rooted in Early Victorian ideas of British freedom, and no twentieth century Macaulay has yet arisen to smite it hip and thigh with his amazing armoury of illustration and argument.

Youth and Service

I am none the less convinced that our youth to-day are ready as ever to give service to a cause, if that cause were clearly set before them ; and it is not their fault that the need of service has not as yet come home to them.

Most of the preaching to which they have been

subject since the last war has painted a picture of progress at home through the medium of the State and peace abroad through the medium of the League without suggesting to them that the duties of a good citizen, whether of this country or the world, are not entirely comprised in moral fervour and intellectual conviction. There has been much emphasis on the need of faith, but the need of works—of service, that is, if not of sacrifice—has been kept in the background. All that is changing rapidly now; but youth is still being told that military efficiency even of the Swiss or Scandinavian variety spells militarization and constitutes an even greater danger to British liberty than the heady process of risking war without being prepared for it.

It is a great saying that “the price of freedom is eternal vigilance”; but nervous sentries are notoriously inefficient, and freedom has more to fear from lack of balance in its own defenders than from the virulence of its enemies. The vigilance which consists mainly of excited challenges to shadows is not a strength but a weakness to the cause it purports to serve. There are dangers to be weighed behind the lines of freedom as well as in front of them, and these latter will never be dispelled without attention to the former.

For it is not in military efficiency *per se*, but in the lack of it, that our main danger lies—in the fact, which none can dispute, that in training and organisation for the service of a cause we are the inferiors, not only of the dictatorships, but of other democratic peoples. Democracy has certain notorious weaknesses, but military inefficiency is not necessarily one of them—witness France, Scandinavia and Switzerland.

Nor can it be maintained that the compulsory training of youth in service to the State is prejudicial to democracy—witness not only France, Scandinavia and Switzerland but Australia and New Zealand, in both of which Dominions a variant of the Swiss system of cadet and militia training was made compulsory by general agreement before the last war. Australia, it is true, abandoned the system for financial reasons in the economic setback which nearly overwhelmed her in 1929; but the Labour Government of one Australian State has already proposed that it should be restored, and there is little doubt that the Australian democracy would march with ours, if we introduced the system here.

No one has yet been found to maintain that the Australians of our day have suffered some diminution of independence and virility of mind by the training through which they passed when they were young. No one furthermore can suggest that the democratic character of Australian Governments was weakened or impaired. We make ourselves ridiculous by ignoring such democratic examples as hers and denouncing in every proposal for citizen training of our own youth the sinister and awful shadow of the Prussian sergeant-major. The long Australian stride remains unchanged, and there is no part of the world more free than the Australian continent from the goose-step order of ideas.

Ridiculous to other democracies, but most ridiculous of all, alas, to the German people. Their confidence is not unnaturally taking to itself a touch of arrogance as they study the contents of our newspapers; and nothing in the world will restore the belief of Europe in Britain's morale as compared with Germany's short

of a general resolve on our part to make an end of war scares and unpreparedness. Detest with all our hearts, as we most rightly do, the subordination of mind and the intolerance which mark the Nazi system, we must not blind ourselves to the strength of spirit which it has recreated in the youth of a great people.

If there are blots upon their system, there are also blots on ours, as our head teachers have demonstrated in West Lothian; and we must really abandon for good the perilous idea that freedom can find no middle course between the two destructive extremes of shackling the mind of youth and spoiling its character. We have owed much for generations to the discipline of the public schools, but only a small and favoured section of our manhood has had that great advantage; and what we need to-day is something as English in spirit as the public school discipline applied without privilege of class to the whole young manhood of the nation.

That, I am deeply convinced, is the only way to preserve our liberty. Another few years of drift and *laissez-faire*, and liberty will be gone.

For nothing in the world can justify us in further blindness to the fact that the young men of every other nation of consequence in Europe, including the democracies, are, with the single exception of our own, brought up to acknowledge the duty of personal service to the State and compelled to render that duty for a short period as they cross the threshold to full enjoyment of their citizenship. There is nothing in our whole educational system, not even in the public schools, to bring a similar sense of public duty home to our young men, and we are the poorer for it.

Our young manhood will, after all, derive greater benefits from their State than are provided by any other in the world ; they will enjoy an equal, and in most cases a much wider, freedom ; they will carry, as members of a democracy which controls the character and policy of many scattered Governments, a heavy responsibility extending to a quarter of the human race ; and they will exercise a proportionate influence on the freedom of other countries, whose future must depend in many ways upon the quality of this democracy and the part it plays in the shifting balance of world forces. Can we wonder that foreign countries are watching us with anxious interest and asking themselves with growing concern whether we will much longer be equal to our immense responsibilities ?

We can soon arrest that concern, but there is only one way to do it. That way is citizen training as the climax of education for all our youth.

The Influence of the Press

When once that way is taken, alarm will yield to confidence, and we shall find a salutary change, not only in our own atmosphere, but in the climate of Europe. For the tone of our Press will change, as we ourselves grow steadier, and that is of profound importance.

It is frequently averred that the Press is responsible for the present nervous state of European civilization ; but newspapers would soon collapse if they failed in their different ways to reflect some considerable section

of domestic opinion, and we are much too inclined to saddle the journalist's profession with our own extravagances and limitations. We have a free Press and are rightly proud of the fact, but we do not always recognize that a free Press can only live by the measure of its fidelity to the movements of public opinion.

It is true, no doubt, that our journals often use their liberty to print articles, news paragraphs, jokes and cartoons which do not promote the cause of international goodwill, particularly with the dictatorships. The control of their Press by autocratic Governments does not, however, seem to result in discouragement of exchanges of that sort—so that, in the matter of international amenities, “honours easy” seems to be the just verdict between other systems and our own.

When Governments and peoples become less critical of their neighbours, the Press of all countries will, no doubt, conform; and we shall all be the better for it. In the meantime and pending a further general development of what President Roosevelt calls the “good neighbour” attitude, we cannot fairly blame our newspapers for interpreting our likes and dislikes to ourselves and other peoples as they are.

The political difficulties of a free Press arise mainly out of its independent relations with the Government. Its assistance is indispensable to any Government, and it often has a searching choice to make between telling its readers the facts and embarrassing a Government which it does not desire to criticize. In this respect the public spirit of our Press is altogether exceptional. A signal example was its restraint throughout the period of strain which preceded the Abdication crisis—a restraint

so marked that many people have since regarded it as an error.

There is nothing more difficult for the controllers of the Press to decide than the proper course dictated by patriotic duty on such critical subjects as the quality of our national defences and the gaps which may exist in them. In general they may be said to be readier to abstain from making a difficult business more difficult than to take an independent line very much in advance of a Government which they support. Air-raid precautions are a case in point, and many responsible newspapers must have been asking themselves for months past whether the public interest demanded suppression of the truth rather than publication of it.

My own strong feeling is that if our newspapers are to serve democracy as they desire to do, they must give the benefit of any doubt in such matters decisively to the truth. The Press under a dictatorship is an instrument of State ; it speaks as the Government desires it to speak. But here the Press is independent of the Government, and newspapers do not discharge their duty to the nation if they simply attack or defend the policies of the day according to the colour of their politics. They have access to a wide range of information which the ordinary newspaper reader cannot possibly possess ; and they can use the greater part of it with little danger of giving foreign Governments more than their intelligence services obtain from other sources.

It is arguable that our leading newspapers might have compelled the Government to face rearmament without the two years' delay which has proved so costly ; but they have latterly made up for past hesitations, and

the nation undoubtedly owes its Press a heavy debt of gratitude. Some newspapers, moreover, have gone far in advance of the Government in demanding the compilation of a register for home defence and even in calling attention to the question of compulsory training.

These are true services to the nation ; and the Press cannot render more until the nation itself enables it to do so. It is idle to blame our newspapers for the fact that foreign countries look with astonishment on our recruiting methods and criticize us for the strange mixture of scare-mongering, pooh-poohing and special pleading which characterizes our discussion of defence necessities. Our newspapers can only present us as we are, and we are ourselves responsible for the impression which we make on other peoples. But that impression is none the less of immense importance to peace, and it is becoming acutely desirable to make it one of greater cohesion, strength and dignity.

I have made a point of asking visitors to all parts of Germany whether English newspapers are usually to be found in German restaurants, beer-gardens and so on, and I gather that they are supplied to customers in considerable quantities. It is manifest from this fact that their presence is not in general unwelcome to high German authority, but, on the contrary, welcome to it. The explanation is, I believe, two-fold. There is, in the first place, a great deal in many of our newspapers to support the view (which the German Government is anxious to propagate) that Germany must be always increasing her armaments because she has in Britain a jealous and implacable enemy.

But that is not the worst of it. More prejudicial still

is the picture which German readers derive from English newspapers of the difficulty and controversy that attend our efforts to achieve an adequate measure of rearmament and military efficiency. What we advertise as triumphs of our recruiting campaign are hardly impressive from their standpoint, and still less so are the arguments which are used in Britain alone of all democracies against the training of youth in public duty. It is therefore to be feared that the great majority of Germans rise nowadays from a perusal of our newspapers with a strengthened sense of national pride and confidence.

Our Press cannot be blamed for the fact that it renders this signal service to German patriotism. It simply reflects the mind and temper of its own country, and it cannot possibly do otherwise, whatever the consequences.

The Moral Issue

I do not wish to make too much of the effect of our divisions on foreign opinion or to over-emphasize it as an argument for putting our house in order. Obviously we must do what we think right for our own reasons without regard to foreign criticism. But having undertaken in this book to consider our situation from other people's standpoint as well as from our own, I am bound to observe that the assumption of effortless superiority, which is, as I have already said, a habit of mind with us, is according less and less with other people's estimates of our capacity. We are allowing a

renewed belief in British decadence to become more prevalent than it ought to be, and that is terribly dangerous.

Not that Germany is likely to be tempted by it into a direct attack on us. She did not make one in 1914, despite the low opinion she then held of our military capacity and national morale. The danger is not so much that she will challenge us to our face as that she will tend more and more to discount our will and power to intervene in any situation she may choose to create, however disagreeable to us and our ideals. The past is there within living memory to prove that that is not the road to European peace or to a limitation of armaments.

The challenge, I say and say again, is moral rather than material. When the weight of our material resources has been made to tell to the uttermost, the moral challenge will still remain, and it is our answer to that which will turn the scales.

Cannot then our parties unite to put that issue to our people in straight and simple terms? The people would rise to it like one man.

Here, in the simplest possible phrase, is the outline of such an argument. It is the leaders, of all parties, who speak:—

THE ARGUMENT

There is not a man or woman in Britain who does not detest the idea of dictation to this country by the great dictatorships ; and there is not a man or woman in Britain who does not loathe the thought of war—the horror of it, the stupidity, the awful and irreparable sacrifice.

That is the greatest of our problems to-day—how to save freedom in Europe without being forced into war.

How War Begins

No country at this moment really desires war. The peoples certainly do not. The Governments do not either. But some of them are resolved to squeeze a great deal out of other nations by using to the utmost the general fear of war. They trust, in fact, to other people's love of peace to give them what they demand without war.

That is what all democracies have to face to-day—on the one side, humiliating surrender to methods and principles they detest ; on the other side, a growing peril of war.

Such a situation cannot last. Some day, sooner or later, it will end in war. Some day some dictatorship will go too far, as Germany did in 1914.

Some day a challenge will be given from which neither challenger nor challenged can withdraw.

Breaking-point might come quite suddenly, before we had realized the danger, as it did in 1914. Speaking to the League of German Maidens in March, 1936, Hitler used the following words:—

“ If I should ever want to attack an enemy, I should do it differently from Mussolini. I should not negotiate and make preparations for months. As I have always done, I should fall upon my enemy suddenly, like lightning striking out of the night.”

Hitler does not want war ; but he has shown by swift decision on four separate occasions that he is prepared to risk it to gain his ends. His whole history proves that he will not hesitate if he believes that something vital to Germany's greatness is at stake.

We must be equally ready and equally resolved if we are to speak on equal terms with a leader of his courage, wielding like a two-edged sword the diplomatic and military power of a great embattled State.

What the Pacifists Say

The pacifists say—“ Do not think of war and do not prepare for it. No one can fight you, if you refuse to fight. Thinking of war and preparing for it merely brings it on.”

In a sense that is all true. The militarist nations would have no need to fight us, if we could not fight back. But that would not prevent their taking from us all we stand for in the world. We should have to agree to every demand they made, whatever the cost to our freedom and our ideals, if they were strong and we were weak.

Militarism then would triumph, democracy would be trodden underfoot, and all hope would be gone of reviving the great ideals enshrined in our devotion to the League.

Pacifism would therefore spell the end of democracy in the conditions with which we have to deal in our time.

Do We Need Conscription?

Others at the opposite extreme say—"We must have compulsory military service and a huge conscript army, or we are lost. Let us then follow the splendid example of democracy in France. We cannot stand up to the dictatorships unless we do as France and all other democracies in Europe have done."

One point in that statement is unquestionably true—namely, that conscription will be necessary in this country if we are forced into war. We could not possibly save the cause of democracy in another European struggle without sacrifices as terrible as those we made little more than twenty years ago.

In order to avoid conscription and the awful sacrifice which it entails, it is vital to prevent another war. If, then, we believed that war can not be avoided without universal military training in time of peace, we would say so without concealment—for you have trusted us, your leaders of all parties, to tell you the truth.

What we propose is not conscription or anything resembling it; but it will, we believe, suffice to show that this great people is ready for all contingencies. That is the only way to put the danger of war and conscription out of sight.

If, then, you detest, as we do, the very idea of sending out our young men as “cannon-fodder” to another great war on the continent, support the proposals which we make to you. The old proverb that “a stitch in time saves nine” was never more to the point. The immediate action we suggest will save you from an effort nine-and-ninety times as great which this country will have to make if war is forced upon it because of its blindness and sloth.

Our Weakest Point

National Defence, for the purpose of avoiding war, is not a complicated subject. The main essential of it is to make yourself as strong as possible at your weakest point, for that is the point at which an enemy would strike.

What is our weakest point?

It is not the sea. Our Navy is strong enough to guard the seas around this island. No other European Navy, now, can challenge it with any hope of success.

It is not the land. So long as the Navy is supreme in our home waters, no foreign army can land upon our shores and compel us to acknowledge defeat.

There remains the air—an entirely new peril, of which a few weak air attacks in the course of the last war only gave a passing hint.

Air bombardment would, in the next war, be launched against us wave after wave, day by day, week after week. The enemy would concentrate all the forces he could spare upon that single purpose, because it would be his only chance of forcing us to admit defeat.

Air bombardment would begin from the first moment of war, perhaps without declaration, with no more warning than the few minutes which it takes a bomber to reach London from our coasts. And it would be kept up over London, our munition centres, our railway junctions and our ports steadily, ruthlessly, relentlessly so long as the enemy had any hope of shattering, burning and starving us into an ignominious peace.

What About the Air Force?

People may very well ask—"What about the Air Force? Would it not be fighting the enemy in the air and breaking up his attack? Would it

not also be giving the enemy in his own country as good as he was giving us? What about our searchlights, our anti-aircraft guns, our balloon barrages and all the rest of our air defence?"

It is a very reasonable question; and if this country is to avoid war, the true answer must be faced.

The Air Force is not as strong as it should be, and we are going to add very largely to it. It will undoubtedly inflict great damage upon the attacking squadrons, and so will all our other defences against air attack. These are steadily improving and they will be immensely formidable when they are complete.

But however strong we make them, they will not be able alone to guarantee us against attack. Our enemy's only chance will be to strike at us in our cities and ports, and those will be continuously bombarded, despite the damage we inflict. The higher the enemy's machines are driven into the air, the more his squadrons are broken up, the more reckless and indiscriminate will be the bombing which they perpetrate.

No attacking bomber will return to his own country with his load of bombs unslipped. We may hurry and confuse and decimate the successive waves—we will, with great effect. But we shall not stop them all or prevent a hail of bombs from being dropped. The numbers against us will be too great.

Counter-Bombing

Detest it as we may, we shall also be forced ourselves to bomb the enemy in his own country. But we cannot rely upon counter-bombing to prevent him from continuing his attacks on us.

Take the case of Germany, the strongest Air Power within striking distance of our coasts. We want to live at peace with the German people; but their Government will continue to challenge all we stand for if it believes that we dare not face the risk of war as bravely as it does itself.

Great damage could be inflicted on Germany, particularly in the manufacturing region nearest to us, by an Air Force such as we possess. But Berlin is a small city compared to London, and it is much further from our starting line than London is from the German one. Germany's industries are much more scattered than ours, and she stands in no danger of starvation by the destruction of her ports.

But this is more important still—her whole population is already organized and trained to prevent confusion, fire and suffering from air attack. Apart from her huge armies, apart from a host of munition workers reserved to keep her war factories in continuous production, apart from all her other war services, she has five million civilians, men and women, already organized, trained and told off to air raid precautions of every sort.

What a target for air bombardment is Britain compared with that!

The Peril of Unpreparedness

London is almost the first point an attacking air squadron would reach. Its 9,000,000 inhabitants are thickly crowded over a comparatively small area. Nearly one-fifth of Britain's total population lives within a 15-mile radius of Charing Cross.

The feeding, lighting, watering and sanitation of this vast mass of crowded people is a complex enough business in time of peace. It needed a tremendous effort to operate the essential services during the short emergency of the General Strike.

Think of the organization required to keep them going under continuous air bombardment which shatters block after block of buildings, starts fire after fire, cuts the electric wires, opens the sewers, severs the gas-pipes, clutters the roads and railways, harasses or even blocks the Thames estuary and the docks !

Only slightly less exposed are other essential ports and the crowded factory centres of Central England. There is nothing like this concentration of targets for counter-bombardment in Germany.

We are not pointing this out in order to paint a defeatist picture of our exposure to overhead attack. Far from it. We can reduce the danger to comparatively small limits by organization, training and preparedness in the civil population. We can make ourselves invincible, if we choose to do it.

But till we choose to do it we shall not be able to stand up as we should and say, if need be, "Thus far and no further" to the pressure of the militarist States.

The Lesson to Remember

Many people dismiss this necessity from their minds by saying "We can do all that is required of us when war comes. In the meantime, why this demand for war-time measures?"

That argument is foolish and perilous.

It is true that we were unprepared in 1914 and yet had time to organize the whole country for war and victory.

But in 1914 the air menace was practically non-existent. The enemy could not strike at us in our own homes while we were marshalling our strength, building up our munition supply, and training our new armies. We could, therefore, prepare to strike in our own time, while the bulk of the fighting was done by the French armies in France.

Now the prospect is entirely different. We shall be struck at in our homes and in our factories within an hour of the first outbreak of war, perhaps without warning. If we are unorganized, untrained and unprepared, there must be terrible confusion and a hideous tale of needless suffering.

Even in the last war we paid a for ever irreparable price for our unpreparedness. But for that, it would not have lasted four years and cost us a million lives, nor left us its awful legacy of shat-

tered world conditions, unemployment and poverty. But this time the price of unpreparedness would be infinitely heavier. It might indeed be more than loss of life and wealth ; it might be defeat instead of victory, with terms of peace which destroyed our independence and the great fabric of social welfare which long efforts have erected.

The Service of Liberty

We do not state these facts in order to base on them an appeal to mere selfish fear or narrow national self-interest. If this great democracy wished to live unto itself alone, it could not do so.

The question whether Britain is to be weak or strong, organized or disorganized, much or little respected, affects not Britain alone but the whole cause of which she has been the leader since the victory of democracy in 1918—the cause, that is, of liberty for nations no less than individuals, and of fair and decent conduct as compared with arbitrary force in international society.

This cause is, broadly speaking, the democratic cause, the cause of all who believe that men should govern themselves, think freely, speak freely and meet freely with each other. We thought in 1918 that the world had been made safe for democracy. But democracy is once more in mortal jeopardy, and Britain's unflinching support is vital to it.

The ultimate test of our democracy will be the moral test. Democracy confers enormous benefits ;

can it inspire a corresponding devotion? Can it foster in those who enjoy its unequalled privileges a sense of duty comparable to that evoked by the dictators amongst their own peoples?

Democracy, in Lincoln's immortal phrase, is "government of the people, for the people, by the people." When he first coined that phrase at Gettysburg, he was praising men who had given their lives in order that liberty as they understood it should prevail upon the North-American continent.

We, too, have shown in our own generation that war will lift us to a splendid height of service and a noble acceptance of sacrifice. To-day we are called on once again to defend the cause for which so many millions perished, and we can do it without war, if we will nerve ourselves to the effort. But we shall not do it without war unless here and now, while peace is still unbroken, we show a devotion and a readiness for service equal to those which inspire the peoples under dictatorships.

Liberty and peace are not for nations inferior in spirit to those who are challenging liberty and threatening peace. We ask you to take the measures we propose because they will raise the moral standing of this nation and the spiritual status of its youth to the height of a great argument—because, in very truth, the cause of democracy in Europe is now dependent upon you.

The balance is uncertain, but you can turn it. The choice is with you to-day. It will pass from you rapidly. Can you hesitate?

That is the argument. The action for which it calls has been outlined in the two parts of this book—one part a call to age and experience; the other, a call to youth. If our leaders would unite to make it, who can doubt the response?

“Methinks,” said Milton of England in an earlier day, “methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abuséd sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance.”

As an eagle looks at the sun, let this noble and puissant nation now look undaunted at the truth. It will not blind her, but purge and unscale her long abuséd sight. It will rouse her like a strong man after sleep.

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